

FEBRUARY 1913

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE



STORIES BY

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THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

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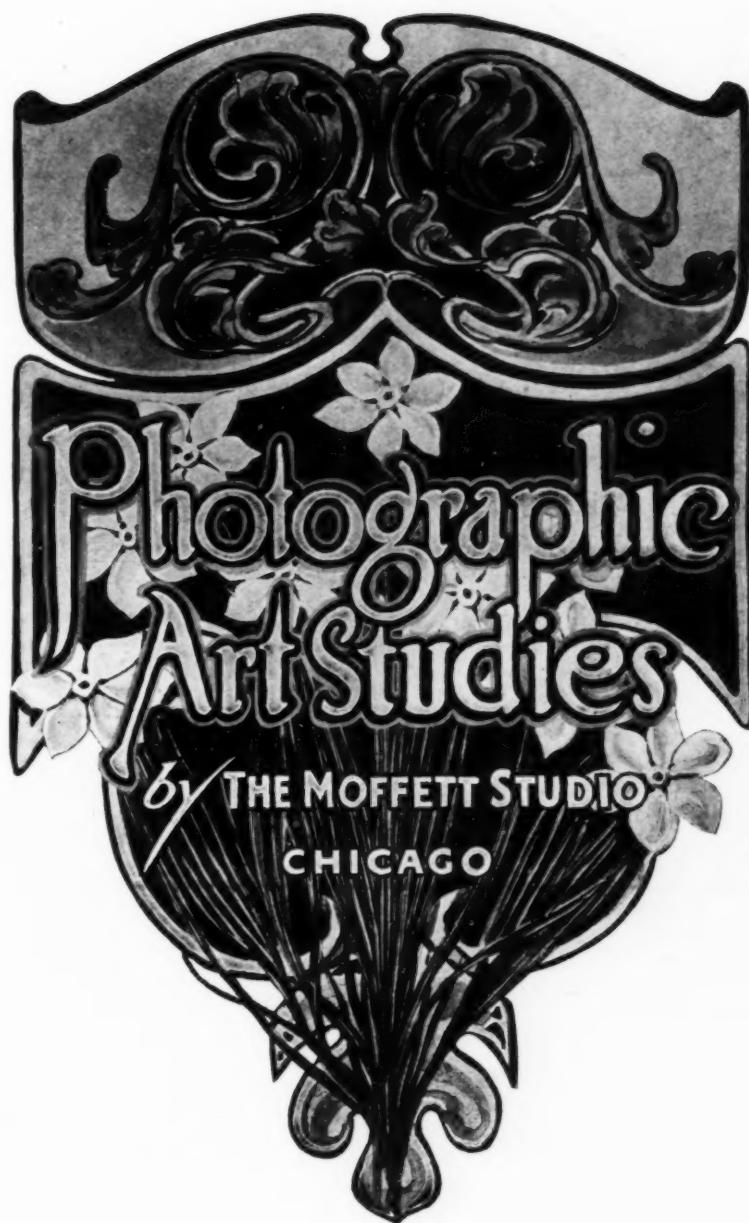
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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE is issued on the twenty-third of the month preceding its date, and is for sale by all newsdealer after that time. In the event of failure to obtain copies at news-stands, or on railway trains, a notification to the Publishers will be appreciated. Advertising forms close three weeks prior to the time of issue. Advertising rates on application.

THE RED BOOK CORPORATION, Publishers, North American Building, CHICAGO
 LOUIS ECKSTEIN, President CHARLES M. RICHTER, Business Manager

RALPH K. STRASSMAN, Advertising Manager, 1172 Fifth Avenue Building, New York
 R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 201 Devonshire St., Boston LONDON OFFICES, 5 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C.
 Entered as second-class matter April 25, 1905, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.





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in "The Red Widow"
Photograph by The Moffett Studio, Chicago





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in "The Girl at the Gate"
Photograph by The Moffett Studio, Chicago



JANET BEECHER
in "The Man Higher Up"
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HATTIE WILLIAMS
in "The Girl from Montmartre"
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in "Milestones"

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in "The Million"

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in "The Winsome Widow"
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in "The Winsome Widow"
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in "Kismet"
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in "Milestones"

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Shortly to appear in a new production
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in "The Girl from Montmartre"
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in "The Rose of Kildare"
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DOROTHY EDEN

in "Lolo Lulu"

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FERN ROGERS
in "My Little Friend"
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The boss caught Sunlover Sam hanging over the top rail, limp with laughter. "Hello, Sam, what are you laughing at?" "Nothin' 'tall, Mister Will, jes kinder smilin' at dat fool hog." From "SUNLOVER SAM," the story of the new negro character created by HARRIS DICKSON, page 634.

February
1913THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE

RAY LONG, Editor

Vol. XX
Nº 4ONE-EIGHTH
A PACHEby PETER
B. KYNEAuthor of
"The Three Godfathers," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY DOUGLAS DUER

IF Joe Murdock's grandmother hadn't been a half-breed Mojave Apache; if Joe himself had not entertained a very solemn regard for the ethics of his office as sheriff of San Bernardino county, which was all that kept him from becoming a modern example of a reversion to type; if Ty Burgess hadn't had the bad taste to vent his spite on Joe Murdock's well-beloved brother, Ted, the record of the removal of Mr. Burgess from this mundane sphere would not have constituted a story of any particular interest.

Men of the Burgess ilk are continually being eliminated by men who labor under the official responsibility of maintaining the peace. To their lot such jobs must ever fall in the dull routine of duty, and to Joe Murdock duty was a sacred thing. Even if the incident is deemed worthy of a meager press dispatch, the reporters generally garble the facts, in a well meant but misguided effort to add a few interesting trimmings to an ancient and oft-told tale.

However, the inner history of the Murdock-Burgess embroilment has never been told heretofore, and since it involves

a curious conflict resulting from the seven-eighths white man and the one-eighth Apache Indian in Joe Murdock, and, incidentally, touches upon a peculiar idiosyncrasy on the part of Ty Burgess, together with certain new, ingenious and highly artistic methods employed by that interesting outlaw during his brief sojourn in our midst, the story of the subtraction of Mr. Burgess' name from the census list may very properly be classed as an interesting narrative.

To begin at the beginning would take too long. Ty Burgess had a history. Consequently we will skip the first few chapters and introduce Mr. Burgess in the act of returning a smoking six-shooter to its repository under his left armpit, while young Ted Murdock, the fifth man to underestimate the mental machinery of Ty Burgess, lay prone on the floor of a gambling house in Calico City, paying for his indiscretion with his life.

All of which occurred in the presence of not less than twenty other gentlemen, whose sense of impartial justice moved them to testify, at the "investigation" held a few hours later, that Ty Burgess had no recourse other than the prompt removal of Ted Murdock; that it had been a clear case of self-defense, but—

That "but" and the lamentable fact that in all the Calico country there wasn't a tree or a telegraph pole from which to hang Ty Burgess, is very probably responsible for the fact that a delegation of half a dozen of the leading citizens of Calico City, who thought they detected something devilishly ingenious in Mr. Burgess' modus operandi, waited upon the survivor with a frank suggestion that he seek newer and more virgin fields for his peculiar talents.

So Ty Burgess turned his back on Calico City and rode across the desert to Trade Rat, an indifferent camp on the southeast toe of Ship Mountain, where, of a bright May morning, two weeks later, we find him seated upon the front stoop of the Pick and Drill saloon, engaged in the aimless occupation of manicuring his nails with a jackknife.

For some moments Mr. Burgess had been aware, sub-consciously, of the arrival in camp of a stranger. He had seen,

at a distance, the approach of a cloud of dust; he had heard the thud of shod hoofs and knew that the stranger had arrived—on horseback. But the problem of recuperating his fortunes, dissipated in a bout with Chance and her ally, John Barleycorn, was occupying Mr. Burgess' attention to the exclusion of such unimportant trifles as the advent of a galloping horseman into Trade Rat.

Always quick-tempered and irritable, Ty Burgess was feeling especially peevish on this particular morning. To begin, he was "broke," Trade Rat was "petering out," and careless men with money were extremely scarce. To add to the embarrassment of the situation, Ty's horse was held in the local feed corral as hostage for an unpaid livery bill; which unfortunate *contretemps* chained Mr. Burgess to Trade Rat and superinduced, within his seething bosom, a longing to work off his grouch on the first man who should tread on his mental corns.

He was not kept waiting. The chance for an argument presented itself sooner than he had anticipated. A tall, dark, rangy man rode up to the Pick and Drill, climbed stiffly down from a sweating, dust-caked horse, and approached Ty Burgess.

"Good morning," he said pleasantly, "I understand that you are Mr. Ty Burgess. Am I right?"

Mr. Burgess scowled. "Well," he drawled, "supposin' I am? What's it to you?"

"This much," replied the tall stranger, and struck Ty Burgess a resounding blow across the mouth with his open hand. Ty fell backward, his mental faculties suspended for a moment—as much from surprise as from the blow. But only for a moment. The next he had torn open the front of his calico shirt, reaching for something under his left armpit.

Ty Burgess decided not to draw. He changed his mind upon observing a long, black Colt's eyeing him very seriously from its position in the tense right hand of the indecorous stranger. Each man stared at the other; then Ty Burgess exhaled a long breath that spelled—and smelled—considerable.

"The quickness of the hand deceives

the eye," remarked the tall stranger in the polite, monotonous tones of a stage magician. "Now, if you please. Bring out the hand—slowly—and empty. Then take the other hand away from your waistband. Thank you. Now, gently raise both arms to a perpendicular position immediately. Very good! Please remain perfectly quiet. The success of this experiment depends upon absolute immobility on the part of the subject."

The stranger reached over and pulled a gun from where it nestled, with the butt just showing, between Ty Burgess' abdomen and the waistband of his trousers.

"You wear your artillery in the funniest places," commented the stranger, smiling brightly. "Most men would consider it downright careless of you, wearing your gun down there, without a holster. Aside from the likelihood of its chafing your worthless hide, there's the added liability of the gun falling down your pants' leg and getting lost. However, from all that I have been able to learn in Calico City and elsewhere, you're too smart a man to wear a *loaded* gun there—ah! I thought so. So this gun is empty, too. You must be out for somebody today. I declare I'm just in time. Really, you *are* the most sensitive man—"

He jabbed his gun into Ty Burgess' ribs, reached inside his shirt and drew forth another revolver, of smaller make and caliber. Stepping back, with a flip of his thumb he "broke" the gun, revealing six cartridges nestling in the cylinder.

"What an original character!" There was genuine pride in the tall stranger's tones.

Ty Burgess lowered his arms. "Well?" he demanded impudently.

"You are quite right," replied the tall man, interpreting the implied request. "Common courtesy demands an explanation of my remarkable conduct. I will elucidate. The smack in the mouth was a mere matter of indulging my natural curiosity. I wanted to see which gun you'd reach for first. As for the rest, I'm Joe Murdock, and you killed my kid brother Ted, down at Calico City. Incidentally I might add that I'm the newly elected sheriff of San Bernardino, and I've had a long, hard, hot, eighty-mile ride for the pleasure of this meeting."

"You can't hang nothin' on me for that job," blustered Ty Burgess brazenly. "He'd 'a' got me if I hadn't got him first. Twenty men'll tell you I pulled in self-defense."

"Oh, I didn't come to arrest you. Nothing so foolish. If I could convict you, I wouldn't have bothered coming myself. I'd have sent my deputy. My call is entirely unofficial, and to prove it I will just remove my little tin star, check all this hardware with the obliging barkeep' inside and then proceed to give you the only thing I can give you under the circumstances—a man's beating. When I get back to the county seat I shall plead guilty to assault and battery, pay a five dollar fine and vindicate the law, which I am sworn to uphold—"

Half an hour later, when Ty Burgess, beaten, blind and bloody, opened his eyes on the floor of the Pick and Drill saloon, he heard Joe Murdock remark to the barkeeper that he preferred whisky; that beer, unless properly chilled, was an abomination and he wondered that any man in the desert camps would drink it.

Ty Burgess crawled painfully to his feet and through the slowly-lifting fog of defeat made his uncertain way to the bar.

"Nothin' doin'," warned the barkeeper.

Joe Murdock threw a quarter on the bar. "Let him have one on me," he directed.

Ty Burgess gulped the liquor and set down the glass. The stimulant cleared his brain, and he turned his battered face toward his conqueror.

"When the auto' stage gets in from Danby this afternoon," the sheriff began in tones almost friendly, "it will bring in the mail a warrant for your arrest on a charge of murder. The grand jury was in session when I left the county seat; your case had been laid before them and an indictment was expected. Inasmuch as I was anxious to perfect my personal business with you before my official duty would prevent, I came away without the warrant. My deputy will forward it, and I shall serve it. You *may* be acquitted—"

Here Joe Murdock paused to permit his remark to soak in. The slight emphasis on the "may" and the bare ghost of a smile which lurked around the sheriff's

stern mouth convinced Ty Burgess that the likelihood of his acquittal would be very slight indeed with the matter of issuing subpoenas to the jury entirely in the hands of Joe Murdock. The sheriff watched Ty's hateful eyes glitter a little—he read the thought behind their cold menace and continued:

"I'd like to make our affair as personal as possible, but I'm afraid the law will prevent. I want to kill you, Burgess, but I want to kill you legally. If I'm any judge of character you're not the man to surrender peaceably, and of course until you're captured there'll be a warrant out against you—"

"Will you try to serve it personally or with a posse?"

"Personally, of course."

"Then," said Ty Burgess frankly, "I'm your huckleberry. We'll make it a personal matter if you think you can arrange it that way."

"I'm obliged to you," the sheriff replied graciously. "It saves me some embarrassment. Until the warrant for your arrest arrives, I can talk to you in my unofficial capacity, so let's get down to brass tacks.

"To begin, I'm going to give you a chance—you who didn't give Ted a chance. I've figured this thing all out. You had a grudge against Ted. You picked a quarrel with him and dared him to fight, and when he wouldn't fight, you reached over and pulled his nose. You know that in law the mere pulling of a man's nose cannot be construed as more than a breach of the peace or battery. You know that a man who will walk away from an insult, or who is too foxy to resent a blow if he thinks he can't win the fight that must follow, will go plumb crazy when his nose is pulled. It's such a low-down, contemptible sort of an attack. It'd anger a sheep. Well, that's what you did to Ted. You were standing close to him. He knew that you were a bad man and a killer, but he thought also that you were holding him cheap, because he didn't wear a gun; that you had grown careless. You had the butt of your big gun sticking out of your waistband, nice and handy for him to reach, and since he didn't have a gun of his own and it was up to him to get you quick, he helped

himself to your exposed gun and pulled.

"Of course, he tried to get you first. Any sensible man would. But that gun was empty and you knew it was empty. You wore it there for a bait, just as you were wearing that empty gun a little while ago. So you back away from Ted, knowing you're perfectly safe, while he keeps snapping the empty gun at you. You see a roomful of witnesses to swear that you're acting in self-defense, so you pull that little loaded gun from the holster under your left arm and cut loose and kill the boy.

"I guess we understand each other now. I'm going to offer you a chance—you who didn't offer that boy a chance. I'm going to pay your feed bill down at the corral, give you rations for yourself and horse for three days and give you an hour's start for the Colorado river. You've got to get out of my jurisdiction before I'll abandon your trail, Burgess, and if I come up to you within the boundaries of this county, I shall consider that God has delivered you into my hands, to deal out justice according to my personal standards. If you insist upon waiting here until the warrant arrives, I shall, of course, pursue the usual legal procedure and land you in jail at San Bernardino."

"I'll git," Ty Burgess reassured him promptly. "I'll ride for the Rio Colorado the minute I can get my horse."

"You understand, of course, that I follow you in one hour."

Ty Burgess cursed him fluently. "I thought you was goin' to give me a chance," he sneered. "You've taken my guns, and I aint got no rifle; while you have. It aint fair."

"You're a poor judge of what's fair," the sheriff reminded him. "I'll furnish you with as good a rifle as I carry myself—"

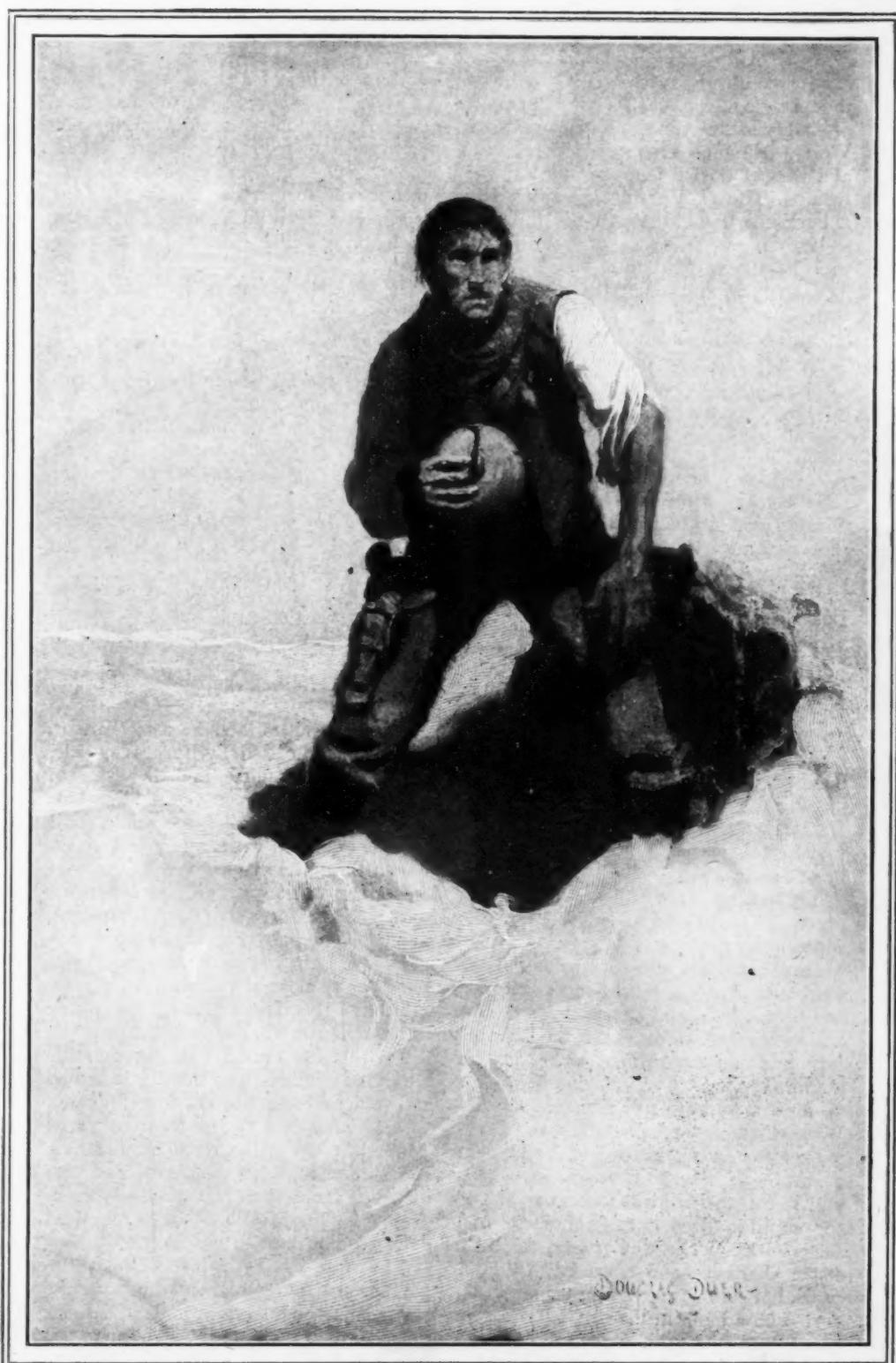
"Then," interrupted Ty Burgess, "if you can get me you're welcome. I wont kick none."

"You will when I get you, Ty Burgess. You forget that you killed my brother."

"Well, what'll you do?"

"I'll kill you a hundred times before you die."

"I don't scare worth a cent," taunted the killer.



Douglas Dwyer

Two days after the beginning of the sand storm, Murdock emerged from his refuge, cut, bleeding, with bloodshot eyes and bare head, but with a pint of water still left in his canteen.

"How about rattlesnakes? Ah, I thought I'd hit home. The very thought of snakes makes you shudder, doesn't it? Well, when I go after you I'll get you, and when I do I'll peg you out, Apache fashion. Then I'll get a big rattler, run a buckskin thong through his tail and stake him out in front of you. Every time he strikes he'll miss your face by half an inch, and about the time you're three-quarters crazy I'll pour some water on the buckskin and it'll stretch, and—"

"You're a devil," panted Ty Burgess. "You've got Apache blood in you. I can see it."

"You bet I have," thundered Joe Murdock, "and when I go after you and get you, I'll know how to treat you. But I'm seven-eighths white, and that's why I'm offering you a chance. Wait here until that warrant arrives, and accompany me peaceably back to San Bernardino for trial, even if they won't convict you, and I'm sheriff of San Bernardino and a white man. Take your chance and an hour's start, and I'm Ted Murdock's brother and an Apache. But I want to play this hand fair. There isn't any justice for poor Ted in a court of law unless I prove false to my oath of office and hand you a cold storage jury, so I'm just passing the buck up to the Almighty. If He lets me get you, it'll be right for me to take the justice I want to take, and by the gods, I'll take it."

Ty Burgess' face had grown a sickly green; he trembled visibly. Gone was the sneering assumption of braggadocio now, for the sheriff had struck home on the one weak spot in his courage. For Ty Burgess, son of the hills and desert, nevertheless had a horror of snakes that made him feel faint and nauseated whenever he saw one at close quarters. Every human being has an instinctive horror of a snake, and Ty Burgess' earliest recollection was of seeing a girl in a cage filled with pythons at a rural fair. He had never quite been able to forget that girl's face when one of the reptiles, becoming frightened, had fastened its black folds around the little snake charmer—and squeezed. In later years, happening across a water moccasin curled on a bank in the sun, he had cast about for a stick with which to kill it and had picked up what appeared to be a

two-foot section of a dried willow limb. To his horror it turned out to be another moccasin, stretched at full length. He had hurled it from him before it had time to awaken and strike, but the occurrence served to increase a thousand-fold his almost congenital loathing for snakes—a loathing which increased as he grew older.

He stood now staring into Joe Murdock's stern face. The sheriff in turn gazed upon Ty Burgess much as Ty Burgess was wont to gaze upon the men for whose special benefit he always provided an empty gun.

"You wouldn't do nothin' like that," the outlaw faltered unbelievingly, "even if you had the chance—which I won't give you. I'm a fair shot, and—I owe you something for your work this afternoon. I'll not wait—here. But I'll wait for you out in the desert."

The old, baleful, defiant look had crept back into his eyes. Joe Murdock looked at him in surprise, not unmixed with pleasure.

"Wait here," he commanded. "I'm going for your horse."

Fifteen minutes later he came back to the saloon and called Ty Burgess outside.

"There's your horse, and there's grain and grub and water on the saddle. Also here's your big gun—I see you're still wearing your belt with ammunition to fit. The little gun I have given to the bartender for your unpaid bill. Also, here's a good rifle and forty rounds of cartridges, which places you on an equal basis with me. Now light out and load your guns when you're clear of the town. In exactly one hour I'll follow, and after that you're responsible for what happens. *Adios.*"

Ty Burgess cursed him through his bleeding, swollen lips; then he mounted and rode southeast for the Rio Colorado.

Two hours after Ty Burgess rode out of Trade Rat, the mail arrived from Danby, and sure enough, as the sheriff had predicted, it brought an official envelope addressed to Joe Murdock—only Joe Murdock was not there to receive it.

The dust of Ty Burgess' hasty departure still hung high in the turquoise sky when Joe Murdock rode his horse down to the feed corral, watered and fed him and curried him vigorously. Next he

made a trip to the lone supply store in Trade Rat, where he purchased some flour, some dried beef and tea, and exactly sixty minutes after Ty Burgess set forth into the desert, Joe Murdock, Apache, rode out of Trade Rat in pursuit. A two gallon canteen of water swung from the pommel of his light Mexican saddle; at the cantle was fastened the grain for his horse and food for himself, while under his left leg a 30-30 carbine reposed in a black leather boot. To the nicest detail, Joe Murdock was equipped for the task he had set himself. His horse—a big, rangy, powerful Roman-nosed roan—a range pony, crossed with thoroughbred, insuring speed and stamina—stepped out of Trade Rat with something of the ease and grace of his rider, swung into a gentle cat lope that carried him over the ground swiftly and easily, and headed away on the trail of Ty Burgess.

The heat of the day was at its worst as Joe Murdock left Trade Rat and swept southeast on his trail of vengeance. The tracks left by his quarry's stout buckskin broncho showed plain in the heavy sand, and the pursuit was easy. Nevertheless, the sheriff realized the futility of forcing his pace to overtake Ty Burgess' buckskin that night. The Roman-nose might have been equal to the task, but it was no part of Joe Murdock's plan to capture his man in the dark. He must at least have shooting light.

When it came dark the sheriff dismounted, unsaddled and permitted his horse to roll. Then, wetting his bandana handkerchief, he washed out the horse's mouth and squeezed some water into it; after which he swabbed out the animal's hot dust-rimmed nostrils. Then he sat down and awaited the rising of the moon.

About nine o'clock Joe Murdock came to a hard stretch of country. He dismounted again, lit some matches and examined the tracks.

"Swinging southeast and going like the devil," he muttered. "He isn't making for the Colorado at all." The sheriff smiled. "I knew it. He has his grudge to settle with me for that beating I gave him, and he'll not leave the state until he has settled the score. And, pending the time when his right eye opens up, I'll bet

a new saddle that he crosses over into Riverside County and holds up with his brother Reb at Whitewater."

The sheriff's conclusions proved correct. At daylight he discovered that the trail had swung due west, around the southeast spur of the Sheephole Mountains to Warner's Wells, then through Morongo Pass and back to Ty Burgess' old haunts around Whitewater. At least that was the course which he judged his man would take, and as he stood there with the seven-eighths white man in his blood spurring him to continue the chase, the one-eighth Apache warned him that in Morongo Pass Ty Burgess might make his stand, and that would be awkward. Joe Murdock wanted to meet his man in the open.

Fate decided the question, however. On the southern horizon a dark cloud suddenly appeared, stretching across the desert, increasing in density and size as it approached.

"Sandstorm," murmured Joe Murdock. "That settles it. The trail will be lost now, and it's me for a draw on the northern slope of the Sheepholes."

He sunk the spurs home in the Roman-nose and swept away in a wild race for the shelter of the foothills before the advancing demon of the waste could overtake him. But he had been too intent on trailing Ty Burgess to notice the approach of the storm in time, and glancing back he observed that the sand cloud was less than three miles away. He was caught in the open, and experience had taught him that sandstorms generally lasted from two to three days. He dismounted, unsaddled the Roman-nose and killed him; then pulling the saddle over his head he crouched in the lee of the carcass, just as the blast reached him.

Two days later he emerged from his refuge, cut, bleeding, with bloodshot eyes and bare head, but with a pint of water still left in his canteen. In the foothills of the Sheepholes he found a brackish waterhole, where he rested and bathed, before heading north again for the Santa Fè tracks. Three days passed. Worn, weary and thirsty, he flagged a westbound train and the following morning was back in his office at San Bernardino, where he set himself patiently to

await news of Ty Burgess. He knew that Burgess' one hour start had enabled him to reach the Sheepholes and escape the sandstorm and the sheriff's suspicion that he would head for the Whitewater country was almost a conviction; also, the probability that Ty Burgess would "turn a trick" before he was in Riverside County a month was almost a certainty. So Joe Murdock sat in his office and waited.

For three weeks he waited. Then, just as he was beginning to ponder the possibility of Ty Burgess having perished on his long, killing trip across the desert, the press dispatches brought news of a daring, single-handed hold-up of the stage that runs from the end of the jerk-water line at Temecula up through Radec and Oak Grove to the Banner mines. The job bore tribute to the careful and painstaking methods which Ty Burgess might have employed. The hold-up man had hidden in the chaparral up the hillside, and from this ambush he had killed the express messenger without warning. Then, having secured the express box, he had bidden the driver move on and not look back. Throughout the entire transaction no one had caught even a glimpse of the bandit.

"That's Ty," soliloquized Joe Murdock. "He always plays safe. Now here's a job that's out of my jurisdiction. A wire to my colleague of Riverside county and he can, without doubt, arrest Mr. Burgess at his brother Reb's ranch near Whitewater. But that would spoil my plans and leave Ted's matter up in the air. Now that I feel assured Ty Burgess is alive, I can drive him back into San Bernardino and settle the matter without witnesses. That's my job and I guess I'd better be moving."

That night the southbound passenger train picked up an express car at Colton, and at four o'clock the next morning the same car was dropped on the siding at Palm Springs. From the express car presently emerged Joe Murdock, accompanied by a Mexican boy about sixteen years old. They searched around in the dark until they found the cleated runway used for unloading stock, placed it against the car door and led out their horses. It was still dark and not a soul was awake in the little desert station.

"Now, Pasquale," the sheriff announced, "it will soon be daylight. As soon as it's light enough to see, follow the trail to the right, leading into the hills for about three miles, when you'll come to Palm Springs. They call this station Palm Springs, but the water's over there in the hills. Some time this forenoon, I think, a man will ride down the trail from the west. I think he'll come over the San Jacinto trail, although it is possible he may cross the ridge farther south and come up from that direction. He will have traces of a black eye, and will be riding a buckskin horse with black mane and tail. Well, when this man comes down to the springs, you ride out into the trail, hand him this envelope and vamoose. After you've got out of sight, run up the first draw about a mile, build two fires say a hundred yards apart, and pile a little green sage on the fires so they'll smoke. That will be your signal to me that you've delivered the letter; and after you've done that, ride down to Salton and tell the man in the general store that I sent you there. He'll take care of you until I see you again. *Adios.*"

"*Si, Señor,*" murmured the Mexican boy. At dawn he rode to Palm Springs, while the sheriff waited until the station agent got out of bed and invited him to breakfast.

For three hours Joe Murdock loitered around the station. Presently, off to the south he saw two spirals of smoke rising straight into the still atmosphere; whereupon he bade good-by to the friendly station agent, mounted and rode serenely away. He was in no hurry, and from time to time he got out a small, but powerful, pair of field glasses and swept the country ahead of him and on each side of the mountain-walled desert down which he was riding.

Ty Burgess, with the funds that were meant for the monthly payroll of the Banner mine safe in his saddle-bags, mounted his buckskin horse, tied in a convenient arroyo, and fifteen minutes after the hold-up was traveling rapidly northeast from Oak Grove along the San Jacinto ridge. At sundown he was well over the ridge and heading down toward Palm Springs. He made a dry camp on

the mountainside, rolled up in his saddle blanket and slept as peacefully as a child.

At the first streak of dawn he was up and moving, and about nine o'clock he rode down the trail from the west into Palm Springs. Below him, in multiple colors the desert flared in all its Titanic beauty, with two parallel burnished streaks running through it north and south, indicating the railroad. Half a day's ride to the north lay Whitewater, and in the hills about three miles back from the little flag station lay his brother's ranch, where Ty Burgess planned to lie quiet until the hue and cry should be over.

Now between Ty Burgess and his brother Reb there were no secrets. Between the brothers there existed a bond of wolfish affection, cemented in the knowledge that each was of material use to the other. Reb lacked the brute courage which made a daring criminal of Ty, but on the other hand he was infinitely more crafty. It was Reb who had suggested the probability of profit in the loot of the Temecula stage, but it was Ty, man of action, who had annexed the profit, while Reb, in the remote ranch among the wild hills back of Whitewater, awaited his home-coming.

Filled with pleasurable thoughts anent the success of his foray, and already struggling with the problem of how large a percentage of the loot the bond of blood and affection should indicate as Reb's share, Ty Burgess rode down the trail to Palm Springs. In the shadow of the palms stood a horseman, and Ty's ready hand dropped to his hip, in order to be prepared for emergencies. Upon closer scrutiny, however, he observed that the rider was a Mexican boy, and relaxed his vigilance. He growled a gruff "*Buenas dias, muchacho,*" and turned his thirsty horse in toward the spring.

The Mexican boy bowed gravely, rode up to him, passed him a dirty white envelope, smiled knowingly, revealing his strong white teeth, and rode on about his business. Ty Burgess looked after the boy wonderingly, but inasmuch as he was used to peculiar situations and not given to wasting valuable time pondering them, he tore open the envelope and to his great surprise found a printed note addressed

to himself. It was undated and unsigned and very brief, but it contained a deal of information of importance to Ty Burgess.

Dear Ty: All off. Menzies here with posse waiting.

Ty turned in his saddle for another look at the Mexican boy, but the latter was loping along unconcernedly. He had the air of one who, having safely performed a secret mission, is anxious to avoid publicity and forget that he has performed it; so Ty Burgess turned again for a second and more leisurely perusal of the message.

"All off."

Then, after all, he had been seen and recognized at the scene of the hold-up. That was bad. He had depended upon Reb and his obliging family to prove an alibi.

"Menzies"—that was the sheriff of Riverside county—"here with posse waiting"—that was at Reb's ranch and they were waiting for him, Ty.

The outlaw broke out in sudden perspiration. Whew-w-w! What a close call! Good old Reb! Ty wondered how he had managed to write the note and dispatch it under Menzies' watchful eye, for its very brevity indicated surveillance, and the fact that it was printed indicated a desire to detract from identification by a handwriting expert. But Reb was equal to all emergencies. It took a smart one to outwit old Reb. Ty concluded that one of the girls had taken the note, ridden down to the Mexican section gang at the railroad and hired this Greaser boy to deliver it, figuring that Ty would return to Whitewater via Palm Springs.

Before his horse had finished drinking, each angle of his desperate situation was quite apparent to Ty Burgess. To the north then, his escape was blocked by Menzies waiting at the ranch, and Menzies, not being entirely a fool, would have a couple of men guarding Morongo Pass to the east. Also he would have the railroad guarded to the south to prevent escape into Mexico. Ty Burgess decided that descriptions of himself and his horse would be sent broadcast through the Imperial Valley and all hope of escape in that direction must be abandoned. To

double back the way he had come was dangerous. It would only lead him into civilization and perhaps another posse with a couple of San Ignacio Indian trail-ers. No, there was only one way out. He would work down the valley, along the foothills to Salton, cross the desert after dark and dodge back into San Bernar-dino county via Dos Palmas, Canyon Springs and Needle Gulch, across the Colorado desert into Arizona, crossing the river at Ehrenburg. In a minute he had his plans matured, and such was the curi-ous mental make-up of Ty Burgess that, once having settled the details of anything, he disabused his mind of worry and left the crossing of his bridges to the future.

The next hour Ty Burgess devoted to a refreshing bath at the springs, while his horse browsed on the bunch grass. Joe Murdock had not allowed for such brazen deliberation on the part of his quarry, and the result was that as the sheriff rode down the valley he was more than two miles in advance of Ty Burgess, riding in the same direction but hugging the shelter of the mesquite clad foothills. Hence, when Joe Murdock rode into the Indian Mission town of Matanzas about three o'clock in the afternoon and insti-tuted discreet inquiries regarding a man on a buckskin horse, no one could give him any information for the very good reason that Ty Burgess had not yet ar-rived in Matanzas. Fearing that his man was hurrying along, perhaps five miles ahead, Joe Murdock rode out of Matan-zas just as Ty Burgess, having negotiated the trail around Strombi volcano, tripped jauntily down the Strombi pass into town, where he watered himself and his horse at the artesian well near the Indian schoolhouse, purchased of a squaw a sup-ply of jerked venison and bread made from the flour of the mesquite bean, and learned, incidentally, that a horseman had passed through not fifteen minutes before and had instituted inquiries for him.

"There's something wrong about all this," mused Burgess. "I'll just wait here until dark, then dig down the desert and cross over to Dos Palmas. They must have men scattered all through the valley watching for me."

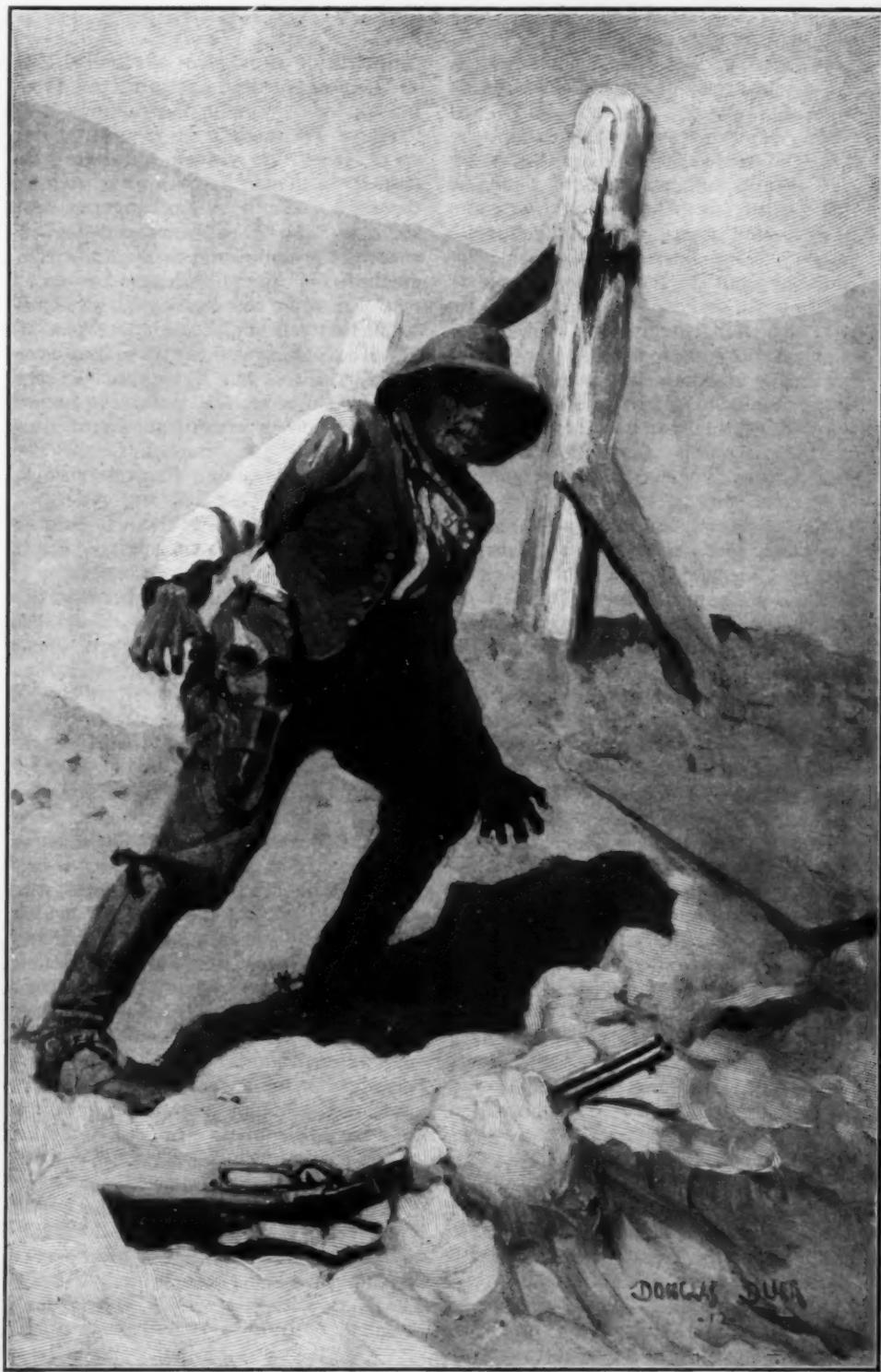
So he rested in Matanzas for the bal-ance of the afternoon, while Joe Mur-dock, confused and fearful that he had overplayed his hand, cut across the desert at Mortmene and headed for Dos Palmas to await the arrival of his man at that point. At dusk, Ty Burgess resumed his flight, and with the unerring instinct of the desert bred, crossed in the dark until he found himself floundering in the sand dunes around Dos Palmas. His horse was spent and weary, and owing to the diffi-culty of proceeding further in the dark, he halted in one of the little sandy val-leys, watered his horse Arab fashion, gave the poor beast the last of his grain, spread his saddle blanket on the sand and lay down on it.

Instantly he arose, with a smothered shriek of terror. Something had squirmed under the blanket—something which in the darkness Ty Burgess had failed to see. There was an angry buzzing and hissing as the outlaw sprang backward, the blanket clasped in his hand. He lit a match and in the feeble glare, six feet away, a big outraged rattler lay, coiled for another spring.

Ty Murdock stared at his angry bed-fellow until the match burned his fingers. Then, trembling and shivering, he lit another match with his left hand, drew his six-shooter with his right and killed the snake. When he could control himself he carefully scouted the ground adjacent, kicked his jaded horse for not advising him of the proximity of the snake, pulled the saddle blanket over his shoulders and sat down. His long, hot ride that day had wearied him and he longed for sleep, but the shock to his nerves had been too severe and he could only sit there, shivering with apprehen-sion, and await the dawn.

It came at last, and with the first faint tinge of gray in the east, Ty Burgess was up and stirring. A little after sun-up he came to Dos Palmas. The water was a little brackish but drinkable, so he filled his canteen and permitted the buckskin to drink his fill.

He was on the point of leaving when his alert eye discovered signs of a visitor to the spring less than half an hour previous. A cigarette butt, still somewhat moist, lay on the edge of the water-



"You don't peg me out in front of no rattler, you mongrel Apache," shrieked Ty Burgess, and sprang for the mouth of the shaft.

hole; the tracks of a shod horse showed plainly in the mud. Swiftly the outlaw's trained glance took in every sign. He was alert, suspicious in a moment. Rifle in hand, he scouted the vicinity of the spring and noticed that the tracks of the horse led away from the waterhole south into the desert. This was a relief. Ty Burgess was traveling almost due east, so after satisfying himself that there was nobody in sight, he mounted the buckskin again and rode swiftly along the trail toward Canyon Springs. When he was out of sight, Joe Murdock, who had thrown his horse behind a sand dune half a mile from the spring and had been sitting on the animal's head for nearly an hour, waiting for Ty Burgess to get out of Riverside county, rode back to Dos Palmas, cooked himself some breakfast and then rode leisurely away after Ty Burgess.

Canyon Springs is in the heart of No Man's Land and there is an old abandoned stage road leading into it, with the ruins of the stage station and the old barn still standing. To Canyon Springs, about four o'clock in the afternoon, came Ty Burgess. He had come fast and far, and the buckskin's head was hanging with fatigue. The necessity for giving the animal food, drink and rest was imperative, so Ty Burgess decided to spend the night in the old stage barn, where he had the good fortune to discover a few bales of musty, dried-up hay, rat-infested and filthy, but still hay. He watered his horse and turned him into the barn, where the famished brute began eating the ancient fodder, while his master sat in the entrance to the abandoned stage station, munching his mesquite bread and jerky, and watching the approach from Dos Palmas. But no one appeared, and slowly the shadows settled over the barren country. When it was quite dark, Ty decided that no sheriff—even Joe Murdock, with his Apache blood—would attack until daylight; so he rolled up in his saddle blanket on the floor of the barn and fell asleep.

But not for long. A sudden scurry of rats awoke him. He heard them squealing and hurtling by; then in their wake came a gentle rustling through the litter of chopped hay that strewed the floor.

This rustling sound went by him swiftly, and he shuddered and leaped to his feet, feeling before him in the darkness for the door. He would have to sleep in the open, after all. It was impossible for him to sleep in that filthy barn and listen to the rattlesnakes chasing kangaroo rats all night. Ugh! He shivered and stepped out into the night, and as he did, a rifle cracked over by the spring and a bullet ripped into the woodwork over his head.

"Is that you, Ty?" called the voice of Joe Murdock caressingly. "I'm over here behind the rocks by the spring. Kinder thought I'd better take possession of the water, and from where I am I command the road for a quarter of a mile approaching and leaving Canyon Springs. I was about to turn in and get forty winks when I heard you snort—or was it the horse? What's the matter? Can't you get to sleep?"

For answer Ty Burgess fired at the voice, then side-stepped swiftly and listened to three bullets hit the barn, where he had been standing, in split-second intervals.

"I have a notion you'll not attempt to leave on foot," continued Joe Murdock, "and if you try to lead your horse out of the barn I'll kill him. Also, if you step out of the deep shadow of that barn, I'm afraid I'll get you, old man. There's starlight enough to shoot, and if you've ever practiced shooting at sounds, you know that the shooting some men can do that way is really remarkable. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do, Burgess. I don't want to shoot you in the dark. I might accidentally kill you, and I want you alive. Step back into the barn and stay there quietly until morning, and I'll give you my word of honor not to come after you until daylight. You may talk as freely as you like. I'll not shoot, and I apologize for cracking away at you first. That was a trifle hasty, I admit."

"I don't want to sleep in the barn," quavered Ty Burgess. "It's full of kangaroo rats and there's a rattler or two inside chasing the rats. I think I'll take a chance with you outside, if you don't mind."

"Oh, but I do mind," chirped Joe Murdock. "I object to your company under the same sky with me. Get back into

the barn with your equals. Back to the rats and rattlesnakes for yours, *amigo*. You may as well begin to get acquainted, because to-morrow morning I'm going to capture one of those snakes and peg him out in front of you. I told you I'd come and get you, and I always keep my word. You can't say I didn't play fair. Of course it was a little underhanded to send you that note by the Mexican boy at Palm Springs, but in spite of all my care you nearly got away from me. What possessed you to fire your Colt's last night? I was camped at Dos Palmas and heard you shoot."

"Was that your work, Murdock?" demanded Ty Burgess.

"Surest thing you know."

"Well," drawled Ty Burgess, "in some ways I'm kinder glad it's you. I have a bone to pick with you and I was afraid I'd have to leave the state before I picked it. However, I'm not goin' back into that barn—"

He broke from the sheltering shadows of the barn, ran across an open space of fifty feet, with Joe Murdock's bullets burning the ground around him, and reached the greasewood on the other side of the little canyon. When he had arrived at Canyon Springs that afternoon, Ty Burgess had noticed an old ore dump from an abandoned mine about a hundred yards up the hillside. Toward this ore dump he was headed now, for it was his sole salvation. From behind the ore dump high up on the side of the hill he could fire down on Joe Murdock and rout him away from the spring. He gained the dump presently, minus his hat, and scathless, but in his hands he held a ruined rifle. One of Joe Murdock's bullets had slipped into the mechanism of the magazine through the loading gate, and the weapon was useless. Safe behind the ore dump, Ty Burgess lit a match, examined the wreck and cursed heartily.

"You're a great shot—I don't think," he called to Joe Murdock.

"Good-night," responded Murdock pleasantly. "I'll get you in the morning. Good-night."

In the middle of the forenoon of the next morning, the two men, hunter and hunted, still occupied their positions of the previous night—and Ty Burgess was

thirsty. Joe Murdock had exposed himself so often without being fired at that eventually he came to the conclusion that the outlaw's rifle was out of business. Besides, Burgess was high enough up the hillside to fire down on top of him, and the moment Joe Murdock realized the exact situation he came out from behind the rocks by the spring and commenced to circle up and around the ore dump to take Ty Burgess in back, being careful, however, to keep out of pistol range.

But while the sheriff was doing this, Ty Burgess had also made a discovery. From the old windlass over the abandoned shaft close to his ore dump, a knotted rawhide *reata* hung to the bottom of the shaft. Ty peered into the shaft and ten feet down he noticed a fair stream of water flowing from the side of the shaft. While the sight of the water interested him, the problem of where it flowed to and why, in the course of time, it did not fill the shaft, interested him still more. While he was puzzling over this situation, the figure of Joe Murdock, rifle in hand, appeared on the crest of the hill a hundred yards above him.

"Hands up, Ty. It's all off," he called.

"You don't peg me out in front of no rattler, you mongrel Apache," shrieked Ty Burgess, in desperation, and sprang for the mouth of the shaft. Down he went, hand over hand, on the knotted rawhide *reata* until he was within six feet of the bottom of the shaft and almost at the end of the old *reata*. He looked down, in order to select a spot upon which to fall, and to his great joy discovered that a tunnel, driven into the hill from below, had pierced the wall of the shaft and afforded him a means of egress from his embarrassing position. In addition it afforded him an opportunity to emerge on the surface unexpectedly and square accounts with Joe Murdock. He swung slightly, preparatory to dropping, when, in the half gloom of the bottom of the shaft he discovered something else. Coiled on the floor of the shaft was the largest rattlesnake Ty Burgess had ever seen!

The arch fiend himself could not have designed a more damnable situation. Above—Joe Murdock, deadly as death; below—

Ty Burgess turned his white face to the patch of sky showing at the mouth of the shaft, and started to climb up out of the shaft, until he remembered Joe Murdock's promise to finish him Apache fashion. That settled it. There was no alternative. He hung by one arm, pulled his gun and fired at the coiled death waiting for him at the bottom of the shaft. His bullet went wide and what with nervousness and the horror of his awful predicament, he dropped the revolver. Still the snake did not move, and with a despairing shriek, Ty Burgess, taking his last desperate chance, dropped, with his feet close together, hoping to land on the reptile and crush it under his weight before it would have time to strike.

He swung from a dangling rope, however. He miscalculated his distance and his pointed heels missed the rattler by three inches.

For nearly two hours, Joe Murdock sat on the hillside above the dump, watching the mouth of the shaft and the mouth of the old tunnel below, momentarily expecting Ty Burgess to emerge and give battle. As the day dragged by however, the sheriff came to the conclusion that he could not bear the suspense any longer. After all, this was a personal matter. It had to be settled—it must be settled—the blood of his brother called to him for vengeance, and suddenly the one-eighth Apache leaped to life coincidentally with the seven-eighths white man. He would go into the shaft, drag Ty Burgess out through the tunnel and settle the score one way or the other. Somebody had to die and if it must be

the sheriff, he was indifferent, provided he brought his man with him.

He crept to the edge of the shaft and peered cautiously in. After about half a minute he made out the bottom of the shaft and the figure of Ty Burgess, lying face upward. Gradually the sheriff's vision took in every detail of the tragedy which had been enacted at the bottom of the shaft. The big rattler was still there coiled and waiting, so the sheriff put a bullet through its head before descending into the shaft.

He rolled Ty Burgess over, but the killer was dead—dead without a mark or a scratch on him. The sheriff wondered at that and searched for the marks of the snake's fangs but could not discover any. Yet he reflected that men do not die of snakebite in two hours, and Ty Burgess had the appearance of a man who had been dead more than an hour.

"There's something mighty funny here," thought Joe Murdock, as he turned to walk out through the tunnel. He paused to look at the dead snake and turned the reptile over with his foot. As he did, a faint, almost imperceptible odor came from the carcass, and Joe Murdock looked closer.

There was no blood where the sheriff's bullet had smashed the reptile's head, and the mystery was explained.

Ty Burgess, outlaw and murderer, had died of fright—shocked into eternity by a rattlesnake that had already been dead for a week.

And Joe Murdock forgot that he was one-eighth Apache and went back to his office in San Bernardino, very well satisfied with himself, and remained a white man all of his days thereafter.





One To Fill



WALTER
JONES



Author of "A Barber-Shop Sport," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WALLACE MORGAN

LOOKIT here, kiddo, you ken quit standin' there like a idjut, 'cause you wont git no tip from me lessn you've did somepin' to earn it. Bring me a picher o' ice water an' ast them incompetent chamber-maids since when don't the third floor back git any bath towel. An' git a move on."

As the carrot-topped bell-hop loped off down the Hotel Devore's turkey-red hallway, Lily Hart crossed over to raise her room's solitary window; but the sash stuck at the second inch and a spray of dust settled onto her from the cloudy curtains. "My Gawd, what a night! It must be a hunderd an' ten an' the air in this dump's like Sam Watson's circus'd used it for a dressin'-room."

She sat down on the edge of her bed, pulled a wisp of linen from her black su  e bag, and mopped her forehead. A jangle of small change clattered out on the spread. She counted it grimly. "A dollar fifty-seven to live on till Saturday, the agent's commish out o' what I'm drawin'—an' next week I aint workin'." Her hand, in the su  e bag, drew out a thin pasteboard. "Ronald Hyre! Hm, his 'phone number in the corner. They make it easy for us fall guys. Fresh,"—she flipped the card in her fingers—"but he's a han'some whale. I might as well of

went to supper with him to-night. I wonder, could he git me bookin', or was that just a come-on?"

She looked up, startled. The bell-hop was standing before her with two pitchers and a glass on a tray. She inspected him coldly. "Set 'em down on the wash-stand—an' next time knock, 'fore you bust into a lady's room."

"Yes'm. I did knock, a couple o' times, Miss Hart; but I didn't git no answer an' I thought mebbe you was overcame with the heat."

He put down the tray and began a struggle with her window. "I didn't ast for no *hot* water, an' you ken let that shade alone. I'm on'y goin' to give you a dime."

Disregarding the tip, he lingered. "It's awful hot up here under the roof. They'd ought to gave you one o' them north-side rooms. You're playin' the Ontario this week, aint you, Miss Hart?"

"Yes. But what's it to you?"

"Oh, nothin'—on'y I go there ev'ry week an' I seen your act. I think you're the best single that's played the house this season."

"Thanks, but I aint got another dime. Will you git out o' here, or must I holler for help?"

His face flushed a dull red and the muscles of his big neck swelled under

his porter's collar; but he retreated toward the door. For an instant he stood with his hand on the knob; then he turned back into the room and faced her under the dim electric bulb. "Aw say, cut that *Lady Evelyn* stuff an' talk to a guy, can't you?"

Their eyes met and Lily's were the first to be lowered. "Well, what d'you want me to do—tell you the hist'ry o' my young life?"

"It's about your act. I think it's a darned shame, the rawr deal you're gittin' at the Ontario. How's come you aint usin' that 'Darky Drag' you opened with Monday?"

"How do you know I aint usin' it?"

"'Cause I been there ev'ry show I could git off, an' seen."

"Good heavings!" Lily thought. "What am I thinkin' of, settin' here an' lettin' a bell-hop throw me the con?" Yet when she met the dead-earnest of his face, it was only her tired nerves that got into her voice. "Well, if you got to know, the manager came behind Chuesday afternoon an' says to me: 'You'll have to cut out that number, Miss Hart. It aint gittin' you anything, an' anyhow the show takes too long to run off.'"

"Aint gittin' you anything! W'y, the song's a knock-out. You're killin' that bum headliner's stale rags: that's w'y he closed it on you."

"Don't I know it? But what ken I do?" Her tone vibrated to his understanding of the way the Ontario was "crabbing" her act. "What chance has a single got anyhow, openin' the show? None o' them music publishers' song pluggers is pushin' me, an' the agents never gits in till after eight. Ssh!"

There was a sound of voices in the hall. She motioned him to the door, and, as the noise died away, he opened it. "I guess you aint stayed in perfessional hotels long. You could pull off a murder in 'em an' nobody'd pay any attention."

"It don't make no diff'rence. You got to go now." Though she turned away toward the window, he saw the big tear that splashed on her black suède bag.

"Yes'm, I'm goin'," he coughed. "Say, Miss Hart—" His voice dribbled down in his throat and he clutched the bed-post madly. "Say, Miss Hart, if you aint

got anything on to-morrow night, could you see comin' out with me for a feed? I'm changin' shifts, an' I could meet you at the stage door—an' we could have some eats an' talk things over."

"What have we got to talk over?"

"W'y, your act, o' course. I was goin' to tell you, there's a guy stoppin' here books a string o' houses on the West Side. Mebbe I could git you a knock-down to him. An' that new fast rag: I was thinkin' it would go just dandy in your dancin' finish—"

"I spose you'd teach it to me?"

"Ye', I'd like to—more'n anything. I aint never knowed any gell that carried class, an' I—when I git my front on they is nobody'd spot me for a bell-hopper—an' it's a rill feed I'm goin' to stake you to, same as any o' the Johns. What d'you say, Miss Hart?—give a fellah a chance."

Gracious powers! Falling for a bell-hop! Lily turned the sixty-four candle power on her stare of high disdain; yet somehow, before that dead-earnest of his, it fell. "Darn it," she wavered, "I'd just like to know who's went an' handed you my goat! Well, though I got to scratch a couple o' them lobster palace princes to do it, I'll—give you a look-in."

II

"What you havin', Miss Hart?"

"Oh, I aint hungry none," said Lily—she had dined on a cup of coffee and a bun. "I seldom ever eat after the show. Just a sandwich an' a Pilsener."

But Mr. Moling shook his red head emphatically. "Hm—um, come on, one o' them chafing-dishes—a chicking Tetracci. Could you talk to that?"

Oh, very well, if he wanted the resher-shay stuff—She leaned back languidly. "If you'd just as lieves, Mistah Moling, I think crab meat makes a awf'ly elegant lunch—with somepin' a little dry on the side."

"I bet that calls his young bluff!" she thought; but he asked for a wine list without batting an eye, and Lily proceeded to a self-comparative appraisement of the sartorial creations about her. She wore a black silk with a shirred

flounce and the lace collar that went with her stage dress in the "kid" song; and her willow plume had been recently steamed. With a satisfied sigh, she smoothed down her simple gown. She had bought wisely: with a black silk you could get by anywhere.

She transferred her inspection to her escort. He was more passable than she had hoped. "If he'd shed them low collars," she reflected, "an' quit clippin' his

But I spose you been here so often it's a old story—"

"No, I aint—often. Tell me about 'em. Who's that little gell over there with them five boys?"

"Little gell! She's crowdin' forty. Billie Brunella—"

"That's got her name on the Majestic glims this week?"

"That's her. Four songs an' it pulls her down eight hunderd. She's cracked



"I think you're the best single that's played the Ontario this season," said the bell-hop.
"Thanks, but I aint got another dime. Now, will you get out o' here, or must I holler for help?"

hair like a chamois pusher, he wouldn't be half hard to look at."

The waiter appeared and lighted the little alcohol burned under their chafing-dish. The *haute monde* at last! Lily ate daintily, with one elbow grazing the cloth.

Mr. Moling leaned toward her with eagerness. "Say, Miss Hart, we struck it great. All vawdyville's flockin' to-night!

in the megaphone, but her wardrobe's got it on Eva Tanguay."

"'S the clothes gits the booking. Who's them common lookin' people stowin' away the steak?"

"Cooper an' McHuff. They got a straight sketch 'bout a rube an' a stranded show-girl; but I think them character parts is bum dope lessn you caricachoor 'em."

"Now Squires an' Jones—that nobby couple 'side o' the pillar—is what I call a swell act: a song an' dance team that works fast together an' dresses their turn to the limit. If *you* had a podner, now—

"Say, Miss Hart, them boys over there with the steins; they're rubb'rin' this way all the time. They aint none of 'em flaggin' you, is they?"

Lily looked past his apprehensively turned shoulder, blushed, and flecked an eyelash at a very blond young man with a cigarette between his teeth. "Ronnie Hyre!" Mr. Moling flung out. "*He* aint a friend o' yours, is he?"

Lily perceived a harmless opening for innuendo. "Well, if follerin' me to ev'ry theatre I've played in Chicago an' settin' in the front row a couple o' nights runnin' is bein' friends, then I dunno but we are."

"Well, you don't want to be. He's a bad hex."

"W'y, Mistah Moling, what d'you mean! I think he's a awf'lly attractive fellah."

"I mean," he said solemnly, "he's the kind of a guy that if the brothers o' some o' the gells he's chased down 'd git ahold o' him, they'd beat him up like he deserves."

This was scarcely the conversational turn Lily had expected. She staged a raucous laugh. "Thanks for the information, but since when are you the arbiter o' my destiny, Mistah Moling? I'm capable o' pickin' my own friends."

"Gee, Miss Hart, I didn't go to make you sore; but I ken spot them rotters ev'ry time, an' I was just tellin' you like I—like I'd want anybody to tell a sister o' mine."

She had meant to become properly angry, but the intimation that there was somebody in the wide world who cared what became of her was not ungrateful. "It's awright, Mistah Moling. There wasn't no offence tuck. I'm sure you got rill gen'l'm'nly impulses. Listen what they're playin'—'That's What I See In My Dreams' it always reminds me, when I was sellin' slate pencils back in Sedalia, what I ust to see in mine. But I guess I aint any nearer realizin' 'em—"

"I know. I've fell for that dream stuff, too."

"What d'you mean, Mistah Moling? You aint never thought o' goin' on the stage?"

"I aint never thought o' nothin' else. Two years now I been takin' buck an' wing offn a gink on Madison Street. He's givin' me all the new steps. All I been waitin' for's a chance to git in right. Didn't it ever strike you you could frame up better workin' double, Miss Hart?"

"No. Why should it, when I ken always git booking alone?" She spoke loftily, but with an inward flutter: her dollar fifty-seven was only seventy-five now and the "small time" houses were turning into "pictures" for the summer.

"Mebbe you ken; also, mebbe you wouldn't be subjeck to them rawr deals like they put over on you at the Ontario, if you had a man to stand up for the act. An' a team ken break into the big time quicker'n a single, an' pull down twict the money. Lookit Squires an' Jones. On'y last week he says to a pal in our lobby their envelop 's five times what he drawed doin' his monolog. He married her offn a hotel switchboard, an' she aint carryin' half your class. What d'you say, Miss Hart?"

Gracious powers! Framing up with a bell-hop—and red-headed at that! But she let him down easy. "I'm sorry, Mistah Moling, but I guess, as a gen'l'm'n, you got to admit I'd be clean dippy signin' up with a rank amachoor I've knowed less'n forty-eight hours."

"I ken dance, *honest I ken*, Miss Hart! An' what diff'rence does it make if it's forty-eight hours or forty-eight years, when parties is on the level?"

"Well, I dunno," Lily temporized; "how'd we fix our frame-up?"

"Easier'n pie. Open together with a novelty number or one o' them rah-rah songs; you in a high class ballad; then me in my solo buck; an' finish with the 'Darky Drag,' workin' out a original step for the dance."

Lily's eyes kindled. It sounded good. "But I aint got any fine clothes like Bessie Jones."

"There's a place on Clark Street where you ken rent 'em, an' pay the rest soon as we're workin' reggilar. An' I'll hit our night clerk for his dress-suit."

"Where'll we rehearse?"

"I know a gang on the North Side that's got club-rooms we ken use mornings. In a couple o' weeks we'll be ready for our try-out."

"You sure are the fixin' kid," Lily admired, "an' I dunno but I'm fallin' for it." He settled their check—with a half dollar for the waiter's change plate; and as they departed, she accorded an enthusiastic tribute to the supper-party's success. "It's been a perfeckly gawghus lunching, Mistah Moling, an' we sure have gave the course o' humin events a sassy push this evenin'."

III

"Well, kiddo, to-night's the night!" Eddie Moling smiled superiorly down upon the dingy suit-cases that crowded his feet. Moling and Hart were on the South Side "L," speeding toward the try-out which three weeks of persistent plaguing had wormed out of Lily's agent. "We'll shed these here grips for a couple o' Taylors, soon's we been workin' a week or two. It'll look more perfessional."

"I already got a theatre trunk," observed his partner, with dignity. "Eddie, when we're takin' a bow, does the lady come on first?" Before he could reply, she flashed nervously: "D'you know, it keeps comin' across me 't my dress aint right."

"O' course it is—sweller'n Bessie Jones'. Them pasteel shades is always refined."

She received the assurance thankfully. Even to rent the gown had required a financial deposit that sent her from the Hotel Devore to a tiny bandbox on Chicago Avenue.

They got off at the nearest stop and hurried to the stage door of the "neighborhood" theatre they were playing. There was already a line at the box office. Lily located her dressing-room, while Eddie first sought the orchestra leader with their "lead sheets;" they had replaced a crippled animal act too late for morning rehearsal.

"Moling and Hart—Society Entertainers," No. 2 on the bill, followed The Hoop-Rolling Hunters. In the wings, the stage manager scrutinized Eddie dubiously. "A couple o' hicks," he mut-

tered. "Playing the family time, right on top of the audience, and that mutt's made up strong enough for a comedy drunk."

The red bulb flashed. The orchestra struck up, "I want To Be a Regular Rah-Rah Boy," and they were on. The house received them with plethoric calm. Between verses, Eddie sprang an exquisitely funny "gag." The "traps and tympani" groaned aloud: he had heard it seven times in the past two months. During the dance, Eddie's opera-hat betrayed its doubtful pedigree by slipping down over his ears. "Take it off!" Lily whispered frantically; but a portion of those "in front" had already mistaken him for a Hebrew impersonator. The team retired into the wings under an orchestral crash that boomed ominously into the dead silence of the pit.

"They're a collection o' tombstones," Eddie groaned, "but that song o' yourn'll wake 'em up."

Miss Hart had "chosen" a sentimental number, entitled, "A Rose in the Garden of Love." She planned to render it "simply, and with feeling," as the script specified; but she was rattled by their initial reception and by a fat woman in the front row, who remarked audibly to her companion: "Get onto her skirt. It's doin' the oceana roll. Up-to-date performers aint wearing that soubrette stuff now. Her clothes is a heap o' junk." Against this condemnation, she warbled bravely, however, until the property rose she had intended to scatter to the winds of heaven à la Edith Helena, refused to part with its petals. To crown her misfortunes, her voice broke on a concluding highnote.

"Rotten!" sneered the orchestra leader to his second violin. "She don't know how to put a ballad over no more'n a trained seal. I'm goin to crab the rest o' the act, because we've had enough o' these bum fillers puttin' the show on the Fritz."

In pursuance of this noble policy, he played Eddie's "buck" at an impossible tempo; and when that red-headed young gentleman's gorge rose in his throat, his collar button burst and his made-up tie came off in his hand, sealing the fate of the act. The "Darky Drag" never had a show. Moling and Hart finished to a few



"Say, Miss Hart, them boys over there with the steins; they're of 'em flaggin' you, is they?" Lily looked past his appre-
an eyelash at a very blonde young man with a cigarette be-

musical director never gave us a look in."

"I'm sure we'll git over better at the
nine o'clock show," Lily put in.

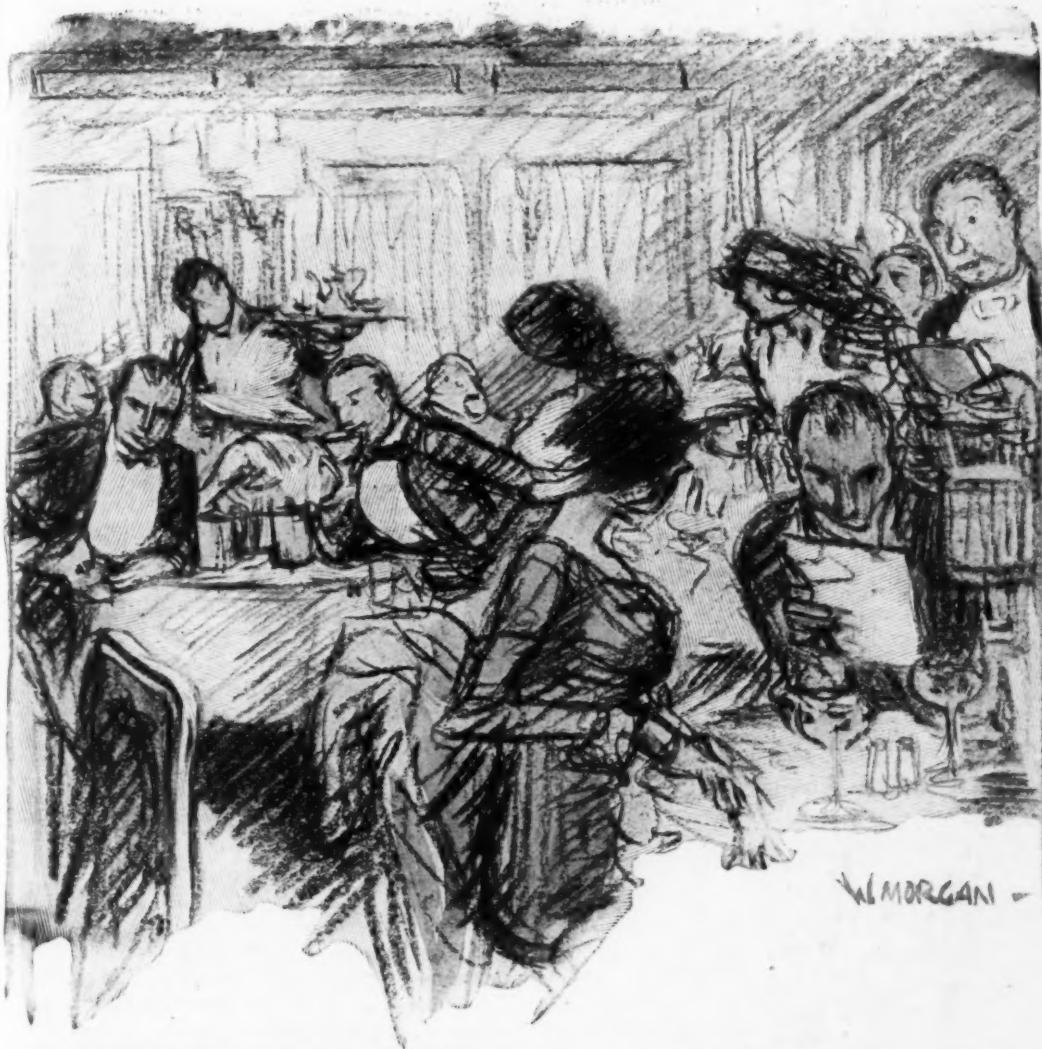
"Nine o'clock nothing! You're closed
—now. Get your duds and vamp."

Canceled after their first performance!
But there was nothing to do, except exit
with all possible dignity. Eddie was
completely crushed; but it was only
when they descended from the "L" into
Chicago Avenue that his companion re-
leased the furies of her chagrin. "Now't
you've went an' made a fool o' me an'

good-natured hisses and a ripple of
derisive laughter.

"What do you mean,"—an outraged
manager confronted Eddie "back stage,"
—"billing yourselves 'Society Entertainers'! I bet you never saw the inside
of a dress-suit before! You're closed."

"But lookit here," Eddie protested,
"them accidents like to my collar button
is liable to happen to anybody, an' your



W. MORGAN -

rubberin' this way all the time. They aint none hensively turned shoulder, blushed, and flecked tween his teeth.

queered my chances with the agents, I hope you're satisfied!" she cried. "But it aint no more'n I deserve, takin' up with a person 't I hadn't never no business to reconize outside o' their perfessional capacity."

He hung his head miserably. "I thought I had it all doped out for us to land solid. It seems like the public aint up to a refined act any more. I'm awf'lly sorry, Miss Hart—"

"A lot o' good that'll do me after I've rehearsed myself to a shadder, lost three

weeks any o' them agents'd of been glad to book me single, an' got stuck with a second-hand coschume—"

"S just what I was comin' to, Miss Hart. I'll take back the dress an' fix it with them coschume people; an', o' course I'll make it up to you, your salary—"

"You wont make up nothin' to me! That gownd is mine, an' I'll return it when I git good an' ready. Futhermore, I don't think your intentions is hon'able. I hate you, an' I never want to see you again as long as I live, Eddie Moling. If I'd of went out to supper with that there Mr. Hyre when I had the chance, I'd been gittin' what's due me now, 'stead o' lan-

guishin' here in a Chicago Avenue boardin' house."

With this delicate thrust, Lily seized her suit-case, flew up the steps to her lodgings, and slammed the door in the face of her late partner.

IV

"Miss Hart, they's a gen'l'm'n downstairs to see you. Miss Hart, why'nt you answer? I awready called you four times, an' I dunno what to tell 'im.' There was a distinct peeve in the landlady's voice. Her fair lodger's room-rent was overdue.

Lily sprang up from the humpy bed onto whose skimpy pillow she had been weeping. It was six o'clock and she had just come in from a futile round of the agencies, supperless. Two days with an "illustrated song sheet" was all the employment she had gained since the eclipse of the "Society Entertainers." "A gen'l'm'n for me!" thumped her heart. "What's he look like?"

"I dunno, excepting he's got red hair, an'—"

"Tell him I'll be down directly."

"Tell 'im yourself—I aint no parlor-maid!" And the hallroom empress departed.

Lily dabbled her eyes over the water pitcher and hurried down the first two flights; then she slackened her pace to a leisurely indifference. Eddie Moling was standing beside the newel-post. His face showed chalky and his eyes deeply sunken under the hall's dim pilot-light. "How d'you do, Mistah Moling?" said Lily distantly.

"How d'you do, Miss Hart? I don't suppose I'd ought to bother you any more, after what you said,"—he fingered his straw hat nervously,—"but it don't seem like we'd want to part enemies—for ever."

"Ten days aint forever, Mistah Moling. I'm sure I aint holdin' enmity towards nobody; but parties that's been foolish has got a right to repent it."

"I'm sorry you feel that way, Miss Hart, 'cause I been talkin' to that guy that stays at the Devore, an' he's still shy one to fill for the week o' the twenty-

seventh at his Milwaukee Avenue house, an' he says mebbe we could git the work if we had a diff'rent frame-up." He raised his eyes to Lily, on the step above him, imploringly. Twenty-five dollars, "advance commission," had been the tune of his conversation with the agent.

She shook her head. "No power under heaving could injuce me to subjeck myself to sech another humiliation!"

"Awright, Miss Hart. But I—"

The door opened and a juggling act clamped noisily through the hall.

"There aint no place to talk in here. You wouldn't care to walk out to the Lake front awhile?"

How casual!—when every evening she had asked her landlady with painful nonchalance. "'S there been a gen'l'm'n called to see me to-day, Mis' Sontenheim?' She would punish him a little. "No, I wouldn't care to this evening. I got to keep a engagement."

"I beg your pardon. I might of knowed you'd be workin'. Is it one o' them houses around here, Miss Hart?"

Lily flushed. "I guess you misunderstood me. It's with—a gen'l'm'n friend."

"Oh,—" The monosyllable pierced her like a sob. "I spose—I may as well—be goin' then. Good-by, Miss Hart."

He turned away. Through her mind there flashed that other night in the Devore, when he had hesitated with his hand on the door—and she knew that this time he would not turn back. "Mistah Moling, it's early yet. I dunno but I might walk a little ways."

They proceeded in the direction of the Lake Shore Drive. "You aint lookin' like you felt well," Lily observed politely.

"'S nothin'. These here hot nights I aint been sleepin'."

"Too many late hours, Mistah Moling. I spose you've gave lots o' them swell chafing-dish parties since I've saw you."

They crossed to the lake where the shore widened away from the Drive and sat down on a bench screened by a clump of bushes. "Look," cried Lily, "there must of been a storm somewhere! The shore's all throwed up with driftwood. I've often set here an' wondered where it come from."

"Everywhere. Same as the people that



gits throwed up in a city. Miss Hart, one time you said you was from Sedalia. D'you ever hear from your folks in Missouri?"

"No,"—she neglected the apparent impertinence of the question for the bitterness of its reply,—"an' I aint got any out there that I'd care to hear from."

"Same here. I aint got any folks. An' when a party's that way in the world, they git lonesome an' up against it sometimes. I was just thinkin': perfessional people's often a little short o' change in the summer-time—"

"Didn't I tell you once 't I wouldn't accep' nothin' offn you! Besides—my

finances is goin' to be otherwise tuck care of."

"Y o u—y o u don't mean—" His fingers caught beseechingly at her sleeve. "I seen you on the street, talkin' to Ronnie Hyre. That's one reason I come out: I thought m e b b e you was—temp'rarily embarrassed, an' it seemed like you'd want some o' your friends to turn to, the m times, ruther'n—"

"So you're one o' them gum-shoe artists!" She drew a w a y, furious. "W h a t d'y o u mean, speakin' to me like I was a w o m a n without any morals! I did see Mistah Hyre an' I aint ashamed o' it, 'cause—'cause he's gittin' me a place in a musical s h o w, an'—"

"Lily!" His big frame trembled toward her.

"Lily!" His arms closed around her like a vise. "You aint goin' to let that guy do nothin' for you, promise me you aint! You don't know—he's one o' them humin' vipers,—he—"

"How dare you! Lemme go this minute, Eddie Moling, you—"

"Lily—my little gell,—I love you. Can't you see I been crazy about you ever since that night in the Devore? I know I'm a rough fellah; but I—I aint dishon'able. I kep' myself decent all them years in the hotels, waitin'—till I seen you in the Ontario; then I knowed what I'd been waitin' for. I aint got nothin'

to offer you excepting I'm straight an' I'd work for you clean through to the limit. 'Ve you been stallin' me, or is it I aint—got any chance—with you?"

"Lemme go, Eddie Moling. I hate you. If you was the last man in the world, I —Lemme go!"

She struggled in his arms, but he forced her face up to his. "D'you mean that, Lily? Well then—I guess—that's all." He rested his eyes on her a moment hungrily. "Good luck and—good-by." Suddenly his lips pressed into a grim line and he tightened her in his smothering grasp. "No, I aint goin' to let you go till you've promised me't you wont never speak to Ronnie Hyre again. Promise? Surely you—ken do that—for me, Lily?"

With face upturned to the damp drops on his forehead, she had ceased to struggle. "Promise me, Lily?"

Her answer was a fury of sobs against his breast. "Oh, Eddie, kill me, strike me, do somepin' to hurt me, 'cause it's no less'n I deserve, treatin' you like a dawg 'stead of a humin' being! All the time I have fell for you; but I kep' kiddin' myself along what class I was carryin' an' you on'y a bell-hop. An' that team act turnin' out a onion, o' course I had to blame it onto you, place o' the public an' the orchestra crabbin' the turn. If you ken git any satisfaction out o' it, ev'ry night for the past week I bawled myself to sleep, when it seemed like you was never comin' round.

"An' about him: I on'y kep' on raggin' —like a gell will sometimes when she's worrit to death with them impudent agents, an' her landlady hollerin' for coin, an' not eatin' reggilar—'cause I seen it got you crazy. To-day, when I run into him on the street, he got fresh an' I tore up the perfessional card he handed me one time an' threw it in his face. Eddie,"—she sank against him with a sudden faintness,—"you ken forgive me—"

He bent down and kissed her tenderly. "I don't think nothin' 'cept you're my own little gell—an' you're goin' to git a cup o' cawfee inside o' you soon's we ken find a beanery."

One weepy, sublime moment, and they recalled themselves to the proprieties of the Drive and the exigencies of Miss

Hart's appetite. They sought a lunch-room where, with her first invigorating gulp, Lily demanded: "What about that chance to fill on Milwaukee Avenue?"

V

"Drink this, Lily."

"What is it?"

"Somepin' to keep up your nerve. I got it off our barkeep."

Lily sniffed dubiously. "Liquors is ojious; but if it ken put some ginger into me I dunno but I will, 'cause I feel more like a ghost 'n a womin'."

She drank off the half-inch contents of the narrow flask he held out to her and the team advanced upon the stage door of the Elite Theatre.

In their dressing-rooms, it seemed an interminable "stall," until the orchestra struck up the overture. Later Eddie paced back and forth, biting his nails. "I bet we're goin' to die in the first couple o' minutes," he gloomed.

"We dassn't," Lily hissed, leaning, white-faced, against a disused "flat."

He looked at her apprehensively. "You aint gittin' one o' them faintin' turns?"

"No, but my head's doin' a panorama. Oh, Eddie, I wish we hadn't framed it up for a sketch. A party's lost on them full stages; an' the idea: seems like it was kind o' rawr, dramatizin' your own emotions."

"But there wasn't time to git new material, an' what's emotions when your pocketbook's empty?"

The juggler was nearing the end of his routine; the stage manager signaled, and Eddie's stubby fingers closed over his partner's: "'Member, little gell, you're back in the Devore now."

The curtain lifted, disclosing a hotel bedroom, embellished with one "property" window, a wash-stand, and a cracked mirror. "Down right" was the bed, and on it sat Lily, with her back resting wearily against the footboard. She wore her black silk dress, with the shirred flounce; but there was no lace collar now to relieve the white slimness of her neck. Three times the orchestra played its excerpt from the "Spring Song," before she spoke.

"My Gawd, what a night! It must be a hunderd an' ten, an' the air in this

dump—I wonder, ken I git some ice water before I faint?" She got up heavily and pressed a push-button on the wall. A bell-hop—in the Devore's livery, appeared. She ordered ice water and reminded him about her bath towel. Not a sound in the house, as she went back to the bed. Her heart sank. "We've died awready." She emptied the black suède bag and counted her change, "A dollar fifty-seven—my agent's commish—an' next week I aint workin'." She took up a little pasteboard. The shiver that ran through her was so real she almost forgot to "fake" Ronnie Hyre's name.

A despairing cough from the bell-hop recalled her. "Put down that picher an' next time knock, 'fore you bust into a lady's room." What did it mean: the laugh that ran through the house? Could it be tension, or—

Eddie's business with the curtain. She handed him his tip haughtily. He butted in about her act. Falling for a bell-hop! Shame now for her shame then. It scorched her cheeks as she gave him the door. His hand was on the knob. A stifled cry escaped her. What *was* that numbing calm in the house? If they were going to hiss, why didn't they begin?

He turned round into the room. Bit by bit, under the dead-earnest of his eyes, she fed him her losing struggle as a "single." He came back with his own story. It was here they had begun to rehearse. Heavings, how he read those lines—like a regular actor! And she—had queered the sketch. She was leaning against the bed-post now. The panorama in her head was revolving faster.

He reached the "frame-up." "What d'you say, Miss Hart, will you try it?"

"With a amachoor 't I've knowed on'y less'n a hour!"

"I ken dance, honest I ken!"

"I'm from Missouri."

It was the cue for his music and Eddie plunged into his "solo buck." She watched him, fascinated. Above the last chords, crashing crescendo, did she hear applause—or only the whirring in her ears? "It's what I git for takin' that nip. Am I goin' to draw a blank 'fore I git through with my song?" She got Eddie an instant with his back to the audience. "Hold me tight, when we come to the

steps, 'cause I feel like I'm goin' to faint."

He gave her a gentle push. It was the "Darky Drag." They were playing the introduction. If she could only get through to the chorus, he would help her out. It seemed to her she was whispering the words, when his husky tenor joined in:

See them couples glid-ing,
Swaying out and slid-ing,
While the banjos
Strum a slumbrous r-a-a-g;
Makes you sort of sleepy,
Baby, aint you creepy,
When you do that
Dirgy, darky, d-r-a-a-a-g?

The music slackened. They shuffled into the weird levee step Eddie had originated. Slower and slower they executed it. Suddenly he whirled her from him, with a shrill: "What d'you say? Do we git by?"

The answer was a vague thunder in her ears. The curtain descended slowly. Eddie bent over her. "We're a hit!" he shouted. Then she fainted.

An hour later Moling and Hart were speeding cityward in a taxicab. Lily was weak but jubilant. "Them agents that came behind—" she demanded—"Do we git booking?"

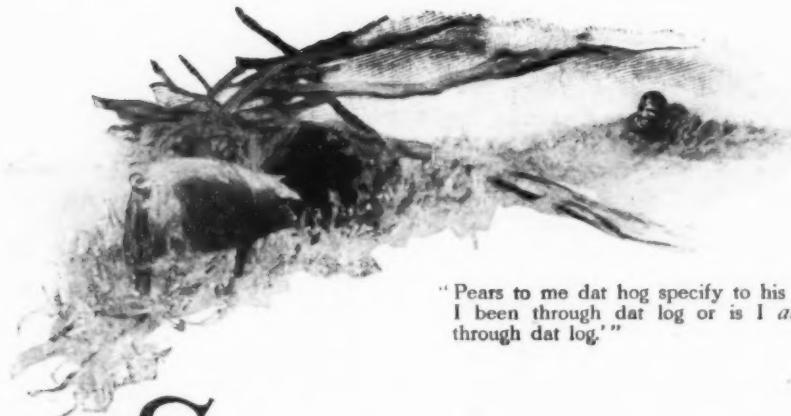
"Do we? Eight weeks around Chicago, with the whole Western time to follow."

"But Eddie, how do you dope it out, this sketch makin' a hit? It don't seem like it 'd ought to int'rest auiences: what happens to a couple o' ord'nary people like us."

"I dunno." He scratched his head meditatively. "Mebbe we aint ord'nary people! Anyway, the agent said it has heart int'rest an' variety."

But this expert opinion did not satisfy Lily. "Yes, but it's just like them playlets o' Cooper an' McHuff you was knockin' in the restrong. We put on a refined sassiety act an' nobody ken see us; but this here aint set us back nothin' to produce, we're playin' it in our street clothes—an' the auience goes dippy. It's my pussunal opinion," she finished judicially, "that the public is nuts."

"Well, what do we care," Eddie chided, "'s long as we've brought home the bunting!"



"Pears to me dat hog specify to his self, 'Is I been through dat log or is I aint been through dat log.'"

SUNLOVER SAM

by HARRIS
DICKSON

Author of "Old Reliable."

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE HOSKINS

AROUGHLY-DRESSED white man slunk through the sassafras thicket, followed by a mournful-looking flop-eared hound. At each step a pair of handcuffs clinked in his pocket. He walked straight up the ridge, watching a negro who sat on a log just inside the rail fence, so intently that he didn't see another white man coming toward him on a horse. The dog stopped and growled; the constable halted behind a tree and waited until the planter rode past on his sorrel pony, for this land and all that was in sight belonged to the man on the horse. Buck Hines knew that the boss must get out of sight before his tenant could be officially bled.

When the pony disappeared, Buck's eyes shifted back to his quarry, who still sat upon the log, but was looking directly at him. The constable moved briskly—he rarely got to see any negro who saw him first. Sunlover Sam recognized that slouchy black hat, yet made no effort to run. Buck Hines beckoned to him from the edge of the woods and called, "Come here, Sunlover."

The constable had displayed no acuteness; anybody who knew Sunlover Sam could always find him sitting on that sunny log in a corner of his field—especially when there was plenty of work to do. Sam wasn't afraid of work; he naturally loved to sit on that log and watch it.

At the call the negro rose and

stretched himself languidly—a chocolate-colored checker-shirted doll, a two-hundred pound baby-faced doll with the shoulders of a gladiator. His gingham shirt gaped at the throat; his lips gaped in an amiable grin; and gingham galluses sustained his breeches. Having no galluses to sustain himself, Sunlover drooped on the top rail, then tumbled over the fence and went to meet the constable. The tawny hound sniffed at Sam's heels.

"Mister Buck, don't let yo' dog bite me."

"Terror aint goin' to bite—not till I tell 'im; he's just takin' yo' smell. He knows the scent of every nigger in this county."

"Say he do?"

"Sure. Next year at twelve o'clock if I was to show him a warrant for Sunlover Sam, he'd tree you in Kingdom Come."

"Uh! He sho is a wise-lookin' dog."

"Sure. Have you got that four dollars and six bits?"

"No suh, Mister Buck; aint picked my cotton yit."

Buck thrashed his boot-leg with a raw-hide whip. "All right, the Judge is goin' to put you in jail if you don't pay them costs."

With stupid curiosity the negro eyed a document that Buck Hines produced. "Mister Buck, what is dat you got me 'scused of on dat paper?"

"Disorderly conduct."

"Mister Buck, I warn't never 'rested, an' warn't never at no cote," protested the negro.

"Tried in your absence." Buck dangled the hand-cuffs; Sunlover turned ashy. "I'll pay ev'y cent of it dis comin' Saddy night," he declared.

"You've been promisin' that for three weeks. But I'm goin' to let you off *one more time*. Meet me under the shed of the old gin, Saturday night. This is your last chance." The constable snapped the manacles a time or two, by way of emphasis, then took a short cut to the public road where his horse was hitched.

Sam climbed thoughtfully over the fence, then turned and gazed contemptuously after the retreating constable, and sang in a low, melodious voice.

My name is Sam;
I don't give a dam;
'D ruther be a nigger
Dan a po' white man.

Sam knew that there was something crooked about this proceeding; he knew that the boss would protect him, and raise Cain with that constable. But Sam could not afford to tell the boss and fall out with Buck Hines. A fool nigger tried that once; and the constable kept arresting him until he proved something on him, in spite of the boss. "I'm boun' to git dat money from somewhar. Reckon I'll start de boss a-laffin', an' tackle him fer five."

Sunlover sat down on the log again, thrust both hands deeper into the void of his pockets, and hunched himself deeper into an angle of the fence. The warm, October sunshine slanted across his field. Cotton bolls were open, and long snowy tears hung down, weeping to be picked. His empty cotton sack lay on the ground beside him. "Huh," he grumbled, "dat cotton wont make a hundred poun' o' lint to de acre. White folks'll git all o' dat. Naught's a naught an' figger's a figger; all fer de white man, none fer de nigger."

This time he heard no rustling in the sassafras thicket, and did not know anyone was near until a voice whispered close to his ear: "Wanta do leet biz-ness?"

The startled negro slipped from his log as an old mud-turtle splashes off into the slough. "Hello, Joe, what make you slip up on me unbeknownst?"

The man smiled, resting both elbows on the top rail. Sam remembered when this swarthy foreigner first came peddling amongst the negroes, with a comical red cap on his head, and a dangling tassel. Syrian, Turk, or what-not, the white folks called him "Joe Turkey." Amongst themselves the superstitious negroes called him "Snake-Eye," and were afraid to look into those black, shining eyes that glittered so queerly.

"What dat you say?" Sam glanced cautiously around him to be sure that the boss had gone.

"Wanta do leet biz-ness?" Snake-Eye nodded significantly towards the unpicked cotton.

"Sh!" Sam warned. "Boss is comin', you better git."

"Leet biz-ness, this night—mebbe—" The seductive foreigner smiled, showing his yellow teeth, and rattled some silver in his pocket. Sam listened to the music of that money and stared at the unpicked cotton in his field. He thought of Buck Hines, thought of Terror, who could trail him to Kingdom Come, then shook his head.

"I come—this night," Snake-Eye whispered, and moved backward step by step with eyes fixed upon the negro. Sam felt a chill creep up his spine. "I come—this night." Sam knew what he was saying from the way he moved his lips. Then Snake-Eye disappeared in the thicket.

Sunlover shivered. "Huh! dat sho is one persuadin' man."

But the shiver was gone in an instant. The day was warming up, the fence corner getting mighty comfortable. So was Sunlover Sam. His perfectly empty sack spiced the delicious languor of his idleness. Three dresses moved between the cotton rows in the bottom—three blue-checked gingham dresses, one big and two little, all made off the same piece; three kinky heads kept bobbing and bobbing at their work, one big head and two little ones that seemed made off the same piece. Sam dangled his foot, watching his wife and children as they picked. Suddenly he sprang up and shouted, "Molly, you an' Sue drive dat hog outen yo' ma's goober patch." The children chased the hog, cornered him in the cabin-yard and got him out, while Sam resumed his attitude of exclusively mental activity. "Huh! dat hog keeps eatin' dem goobers continual. Twixt hogs an' white folks, 'twont be nothin' lef' fer niggers dis year."

Liza gave him a sidelong glance. "Sam, aint you gwine to pick no cotton to-day?"

"Shet yo' mouf, Liza; when a man gits his bizness in a jam, aint he got to set down an' study 'bout it?"

Liza picked on; Sam sat down and studied until late in the afternoon, when the sorrel pony came fox-trotting along the ridge. The planter glanced across Sam's cotton patch; he saw Liza and the children, but no Sam. "I'll bet that nigger

hasn't picked twenty pounds to-day," he said to himself.

The boss reined up beside the fence, a straight-built, competent young fellow, weather-beaten and tanned. He caught Sunlover hanging over the top rail, limp with laughter.

"Hello, Sam, what are you laughing at?"

"Nothin' tall, Mister Will, jes kinder smilin' at dat fool hog."

"What has he been doing?"

"Taint what dat hog is been a-doin' hisself—hits what he got did to him." Sam gulped and choked, and sputtered it out. "You see dis here log? It's holler plum from one end to de yudder—an' crookety. Dat's how come I aint never tuk notice of it bein' holler. Dat pig is been sneakin' through an rootin' in Liza's goober patch. Dis mornin' I jes happened to ketch 'im. Den I sez to myse'f, sezzi, 'I'm gwine to play a prank on dat hog.' So I pulls down de rails an turns dis end o' de log over; bein' it's so crookety dat throwed bofe ends outside de fence. I nacherly couldn't he'p rollin' on de groun' to laff; dat hog sho was gwine to be bumfoozled. No suh, no suh, I aint lost no time from pickin'. Pears like de faster I laffs, de mo' faster I kin pick. Ev'y time I picked up to dis end o' de row I cut my eye round to see what dat hog was doin'. He kep projecting mongst dem sassafrasses jes like he aint got his mind set on goobers. De minit he thought nobody warn't payin' no 'tention, he tuk a shoot into dat holler. When he come out de yudder end—dat's when de fun tuk place. He dodged out like he want to git away from dar right brief so I wouldn't know whar he come in at. Fust thing he know, dar was de fence befront him, an he say to hisself, 'Taint no fence belong here? How come?' Dat kinder 'duce 'im to stop an' ponder. He squint dis way, an' he squint dat way, an' blink dem eyes solemn like. Pears to me he specify to hisself, 'Is I been through dat log, or is I aint been through dat log?'

"He couldn't rightly git de hang of how 'twuz. Den he march back to whar he started at. He stop an' grin jes much as to say: 'Here I is at de front end o' dis log an' got a fool notion I done been

The constable moved briskly—he rarely got to see a negro who saw him first. Sunlover Sam recognized that slouchy black hat, yet made no effort to run. Buck Hines beckoned and called, "Come here, Sunlover."



through.' Dat hog sorter smile, it tickle 'im so turrible; an' he scramble through dat log once mo'. Mister Will, dat sho was one 'sprised hog when he busted out an' fotch up against dat fence. He couldn't believe he own eyes. It tuk him back so scan'lous dat he kep on sayin' nothin' to nobody; but he done a mighty heap o' studyin'. Den he got pestered wid de way things was goin', an' lowed he wuz gwine to git through or bust. So he runs to de front end o' dat log agin an' dive in. Ev'y time he come out, an' aint got nowhar, he run aroun' an' go through dat log agin—roun' an roun'—same as a flyin' jinny. Dat's how come I's hangin' on de fence. When he come out de very last time he look up an' ketch me laffin' in he face. He give one big snort an' went tearin' off through de bushes. Lissen to dat racket; he's ackin' like a plum crazy hog."

"Certainly is." The planter turned and listened to a hog crashing about in the underbrush. "I hope that will keep him away from your goober patch."

"Yas suh, he aint comin' back here no mo'; dat hog think he's hoodooed."

The white man threw back his head and laughed in chorus with the negro. Sunlover eyed him keenly, and seized the psychological moment: "Mister Will, I needs five dollars mighty bad."

"What's the matter? Anybody sick?"
"No suh; I jes needs it."

The young planter dismounted and sat on the top rail of the fence. He appeared to be deliberating; Sam anxiously watched the indecision flicker across his face. His eyes fell upon the cotton sack and Sam got nervous. The planter's lips tightened. He dropped off the fence and kicked the sack—empty as it had been that morning. "Sam, I'm not going to tell you again that you must get your cotton out of this field."

"I 'lowed to have a bale picked out by day atter to-morrer."

Then the planter saw something else: "Sam, yonder's that plow, lying right where you left it four months ago—right where you took out your mule."

Sam glanced at the plow, looked closer to make certain. "Sho is, Mister Will, right in de very same place. You got a mighty good 'membrance. Ev'y day I

been sayin' to myself, 'Sam, whyn't you clean up dat plow? Mister Will don't love to see his plows lyin' in de gullies.' But, Lordee, you sees how 'tis when a man gits so busy he can't hardly turn roun'?"

Sam failed to win a smile. "Get to work," was all the boss said, and then watched Sam start at his picking.

It had been a bad cotton season in that section of the hills. Everybody was discouraged—the white people into more desperate efforts, while many negroes were discouraged into no effort at all. Day in and day out the planters urged their tenants, struggling to get the cotton picked by negroes who now realized that there would be nothing in the crop for them. Most of these negroes had already consumed more than their share of the crop in the shape of provisions drawn from the plantation store. That is what the boss was thinking about as he rode away.

Joe Turkey also knew all about this situation. He knew too the cumulative power of repeated suggestions. He stole back at dusk and found Sam hanging on the fence, securely as if each elbow were fastened with a clothes pin. Sam knew he was coming, but couldn't keep away.

"Better do leet biz-ness," Joe insinuated with a glitter of his hypnotic eye. "I buy some cotton; boat come—go down river same time."

Sam almost turned his back; else he could not have said it: "Look here, Mister Man, you sho is skull-draggin' 'round a mighty dangersome place. Better not let dese white folks ketch you buyin' seed cotton from deir niggers."

The Oriental shrugged his shoulders. "White man no hear; black man no tell." With a jerk of his thumb he indicated Sam's field: "You—get nutting; him—everyt'ing he get."

"Dat's the troof. Cose I aint aimin' to sell no seed cotton—but what is you payin' dese udder niggers?"

"Tree, fo', fi' sack—ten dollar, mebbe—cash." Snake-Eye emphasized the "cash" so strongly that Sunlover turned away.

Next morning the sun flared across that field without premonition of the shock that awaited him. Sam, Liza and

the children were picking with both hands. "Liza, you all got to scratch gravel mighty fast ef you wants to keep up wid me," Sam kept saying. The sun did not stop, but the boss stopped when he rode by. The sun did not smile; the boss did.

For two days Sam worked with flying fingers, and it was late on Saturday evening before he let his family quit. Liza wanted to sit down when she reached the cabin. "Git up, Liza, an' cook some grub; I got plenty bizness yit," he urged.

Immediately after dark Sunlover strolled whistling towards the store. He rounded a bend in the path, then circled through the woods and came back to his own cotton house. Working noiselessly on hands and knees without a light, he filled sack after sack with loose cotton and ranged them beside the door. "Dar's six, an' dey'll fetch ten dollars. Boss aint gwine to miss 'em neither—not atter I does two mo' days good pickin'." He climbed cautiously out of the high door, ran around the edge of his field and struck the river path.

It was a narrow and winding little river. Sam could see distinctly along its starlit middle, but strained his eyes to peer into the shadows on the edge. Something like a long black tongue licked out from the willows; a formless phantom moved towards him. Sam saw a pair of eyes, glowing like a panther's in the dark; a skiff grated against the bank and Snake-Eye stepped ashore.

It was early in the night; Snake-Eye had insisted that it be early, as he had a long way to travel, and must watch his chance to slip past Morgan's Ferry. That cotton must be hid before daylight.

Sam led the way. Neither man spoke, the Oriental following the negro and clambering behind him into the cotton house. Snake-Eye immediately lifted out two sacks, tied their corners together, swung them across his shoulder and started. Sam stumbled at his heels with two others. "Whew!" the negro grunted when he dropped his load at the river bank.

Snake-Eye whispered, "Go git more; I fix him in boat."

Sam shook his head; that ten dollars

worth of cotton might slip away while he was gone. "You got to come wid me."

"Ver' good." They hid their booty, concealed Snake-Eye's boat and made swift return with another sack apiece. Snake-Eye threw his sack into the boat. Sam caught him by the arm. "Wait a minit, Joe; I wants my money befo' you puts dat cotton in de boat."

"Quick—we load him—somebody come—mebbe."

"Nobody aint comin' no quicker ef I got dat ten dollars in my pocket."

"Ver' good." Snake-Eye gave the negro a folded and crumpled bill.

"Joe, how much is dis?"

"Ten dollar—cash—mebbe." Snake-Eye swiftly stowed the sacks in his skiff.

Sam smoothed out that bill very carefully and rubbed his fingers over both sides of it; but he could not make out the figures. He scratched a match; Snake-Eye whirled and jostled his arm; the match went out. "No maka da light."

"I'm bleeged to see how much dis is." Another match sent its shadows flickering across the black, intent face. "Joe, you done made a big mistake; dis aint but five dollars."

"So," Snake-Eye assented. "Fi' dollar plenty."

"Joe,"—Sunlover, spoke with the dogged certainty of a slow mind—"Joe, you tole me right plain you gimme ten dollars fer five sacks; I done fotch six—one fer good measure."

Snake-Eye answered rapidly, and gesticated, "I pay fi' dollar—fi' dollar; cotton much cheap."

"I aint gwine to sell dis cotton fer no five dollars."

"Ver' good." Snake-Eye tumbled the cotton out of his skiff, stepped in and began adjusting his oars. "Goo' night."

Sunlover stared at him stolidly, then looked back along the dark path through those lonesome woods. Snake-Eye leaned forward and braced his oar against a log, preparing to shove off. "Goo' night."

"Hole up, Joe. Put 'em on; 'taint right, but you kin have 'em fer five."

Snake-Eye had known it all the time. He never knew a negro to refuse half price at the last moment, rather than tote his cotton back and risk getting caught.

He did not even smile as he handed Sam the bill.

"Joe, dis bill is got one corner tore off, an' a big red blot on it. Maybe 'taint no good?"

"It ver' good money." That being all he was going to get, Sam wadded it into his purse while Snake-Eye kept wadding sacks into the skiff. Without even a "good night" the foreigner cast himself adrift.

"Dar now!" Sam muttered to himself. "Dat's jes what a nigger oughter git when he fools 'long wid po' white trash. I'm gwine to set up nights studyin' some kin' o' low-down trick against Snake-Eye."

Sunlover hustled out of those dark woods; he could not help picking up his feet a little faster every time an owl hooted behind him. Making a wide detour, he approached his cabin from the far side. Liza stood in the glare which streamed through his door and Sam knew that something had happened.

"Name o' Gawd, Sam, whar you been? Boss come 'long an' looked in yo' cotton house—'peared like he want to see you mighty bad."

Sam got wobbly in the knees. "Looked in my cotton house?"

"He mighty pleased at dat."

"Pleased?"

"Yas; he say we done good work pickin'."

Sunlover kept up a mighty lot of thinking. "What time was dat when de boss come 'long?"

"D'reckly after you lef'. Us hollered fer you; den de boss tole me to fetch de lantern—he wants to see how much cotton us had."

"Den what he say?"

"He want to know how come all dat cotton stuffed in dem sacks. I aint heerd you say nothin' 'bout sacks, but I tole him you didn't have no waggin, an' 'lowed to hang dem sacks crosswise o' de mule an' git 'em to de gin."

Sam recovered from his scare; the boss must have looked in at that cotton house before Sam and Snake-Eye carried those sacks away. "Well Liza, I'll jes step down to the sto' an' see de boss."

Sam wanted to see the boss, and then again he did not want to see the boss. He dragged one foot behind the other

and argued at every step. Before reaching the gin Sam shied off sideways and ducked out of the public road when he saw Buck Hines waiting for him. He had forgot—but the constable hadn't.

The boss had a private office in the rear of the store; Sam peeped through the window. Mr. Will was talking to a couple of tenants, and Sunlover knew from the way he smiled that no canker of suspicion festered in his mind. Without hesitation the negro tapped on the door. "Come in, Sam. You other boys please step outside and shut the door." Sam felt sickish when that door slammed.

"Sam, I looked at your cotton awhile ago." The negro's pulse beat quick. "You probably have a little over a bale; six sacks full, and about as much again on the floor."

Sam squinted up at the ceiling as if making an accurate calculation. "I reckin' dat's jes' a *leetle* bit less dan a bale an' a quarter."

"All right; here's that money you needed; don't let the other tenants know about it. I must treat everybody alike, and they say you are my favorite." Five silver dollars clinked into Sam's palm. He let out one of his justly celebrated laughs. "Thankee, boss; I warn't 'spectin' dis. When I git's lucky, sawdus' is jes as good as brains."

The boss laughed with him. "Don't you bother about brains or sawdust either; try a little sweat." Then he wheeled in his revolving chair and began sorting some papers on the desk. Sam straightened his face so the other negroes wouldn't see him grin, and was already drifting out.

"Oh, Sam, I forgot; we are going to start to ginning on your cotton the first thing Monday morning." Sam's legs gave way; he reeled against the door. "Sim Wiggins will come by your house at daylight and haul it in his wagon."

Sunlover choked and stammered and talked fast. "Yas suh; but, Mister Will, I didn't 'low to gin no cotton until next Wednesday when I got three bales. I hates fer my cotton to git mixed wid udder-nigger's cotton—dey all de time claimin' you got some o' deirn."

"That's all right; we'll keep yours separate."

Sam stood first on one foot, then on the other. "Boss, sence I come to study real good, d'aint nigh a bale up dar—d'aint good *half* a bale."

"What are you talking about? I lifted two of those sacks, and saw what you had on the floor."

"D'aint nigh half a bale," Sam persisted.

"I'll make you a bet. Early in the morning we will look at that cotton together. If you don't admit that it's more than a bale I give you a fine cigar."

When Sam's mind came back to him he was standing in the back door, trying to think. "I'm gwine to need sho nuff brains. Sawdus' aint no 'count in sech a humbug as dis."

The store clock pointed to nine. Sam's mind pointed across those deserted fields—anywhere to get away. He stumbled down the steps, turned the corner of the store, and his first impulse was to grin: "Ole Buck Hines is gwine to wait a mighty long time fer dis money." The grin froze solid when he thought of Terror—Terror, who had taken his "smell" and could tree him in Kingdom Come. The negro began to run, behind the stable, through the mule lot and cut across the field—running with his neck bent. At the fence beside the public road Sam halted as suddenly as he started, his face towards that far line of gloomy trees where the river doubled in its course and circled round to Morgan's Ferry.

"Snake-Eye aint nigh had time to pass dat ferry; ef I could jes head 'im off an' buy my cotton back—give him dis extry five dollars to boot—"

Catch Snake-Eye! That suggested an idea, an idea that was never hatched in a head full of sawdust. Sam tumbled over the rail fence and turned back along the public road, still running. "Oh Mister Buck! Mister Buck!" he shouted, "please suh, hole dat dog—somebody done stole my cotton."

"Who was it?"

"Dunno, suh; he gwine down de ribber right now in a skiff. Hurry up, Mister Buck, we kin head 'im off at Morgan's Ferry."

"Have we got time?"

"Plenty time, it's twelve mile by de

ribber. He's pullin' a heavy skiff-load o' cotton, an' skeered to take de middle whar he kin pull fast. He jes obleeged to hug dem bushes an' hide as he goes along."

"That's so," assented Buck.

Sam had unhitched the constable's horse; and boosted him into the saddle. "Ride swif', Mister Buck. I'll take de nigh cut."

Buck loped off with Terror behind him, and Sunlover vanished into the woods path.

The constable had hardly got off his horse at Morgan's Ferry before Sam flitted out of the woods like a bat. "He aint gone by, is he?"

The constable shook his head.

A lamp in the shanty-boat window shot a wavering shaft across the river. Old man Nelse, the barefoot ferrymen, was bailing out his best skiff. "Here, Jake," Buck ordered a half grown negro boy, "paddle across in your dugout; tell Mr. Bill McKay to watch the banks. That fellow might get away."

Sam wasn't so enthusiastic about this arrangement. He wanted to scare Snake-Eye into dropping the cotton, but had no curiosity whatever to hear Snake-Eye's remarks if captured. He saw Jake go up the farther bank, saw two white men follow him back nearly to the river and stop in the shadows. Presently he saw two horses being brought out.

"Huh," Sam grumbled, "white folks can't never do nothin' widout dey overdo it."

When old man Nelse hobbled into the shanty-boat for a better pair of oars, Buck Hines suggested, "Sam, aint now a mighty good time to gimme that four seventy-five?"

"Sho is, Mister Buck; I been huntin' fer you all day." Sam opened his purse and took out the same tightly wadded bill which Snake-Eye had given him an hour before. "Gimme two bits, Mister Buck, an' dat makes us square."

By the light of a lantern Buck examined the bill. "Where did you get it: out of a gin, or a butcher shop? Corner tore off and—is this a blood spot?"

"No suh, I reckin dat's red ink."

"It's good all right; here's your change. Now I'm going to help *you* some,

and catch that cotton thief. The law is for everybody, you know."

"Yas suh, de law is fer ev'ybody." Sam had just got his dose.

While they were watching old Nelse make the skiff ready, Buck Hines remarked, "Sam, I reckon your boss would be glad to come across with twenty bones if I break up this cotton stealing?"

"He sho would. I hear Mr. Will say he give a hundred dollars to ketch dem fellers. I wants my cotton, dat's all I'm atter."

The constable rose. "Come on," he said; "you and Nelse take the oars—pull slow up the river. Muffle 'em first. Jake, run tell Mr. Henry Walters to come here quick, with a shot gun."

In a few moments Jake returned with a young white man who carried a shot gun. After a word or two, Henry Walters sat down on the box from which Buck Hines had risen. "All right, Buck, I'll send for my horse."

With both sides of the river guarded by men with shot guns, the net was drawing pretty tight around Snake-Eye, and Sam began to wish he hadn't started it. Snake-Eye would be sure to say something awkward. Buck Hines stationed Terror in the prow of the skiff, and Nelse took up the stroke oar. Buck sat in the stern with a long bright pistol lying across his lap. "Shove her off, Sam, and get in."

It came Sam's turn to speak up. "Mister Buck, I wuz jes studyin' 'bout dis. Jake kin pull a heap mo' better dan what I kin. 'Sposin' I sneaks along de bank an' cut dat feller off ef he try to land on dis side."

"Good—get in, Jake."

The skiff pushed its slow way up stream. Sam followed the bank. Where the ground was open he pushed forward more rapidly. Presently he cut across a bend, lost the skiff altogether and stopped in a clump of trees to listen. He kept listening and kept hoping he wouldn't hear anything. A shot came from the far side; men began to yell. Out of the shadows Sam saw Snake-Eye pulling like mad. A quarter of a mile below, Buck Hines shouted. His boat appeared in open water with Buck standing erect in the stern. Nelse and Jake lay

back sturdily on their oars. The slumbering river waked with shots and yells, and the creak of muffled oars. Those two men on the opposite bank kept firing deliberately. Snake-Eye pulled straight away from them, holding his sacks of cotton as a breastwork.

"Lawd Gawd! he's gwine to lan' right here," said Sam, and threw himself flat on the ground almost at the instant when Snake-Eye's skiff buried her nose in the soft mud. Snake-Eye sprang out and came bounding up the bank. Sam hugged the dirt mighty close as that infuriated man rushed past, muttering and cursing. His eyes blazed; Sam could see them distinctly. One instant Snake-Eye halted at the margin of shadow, then ran crouching behind a fence. Sam watched him intently; the fugitive headed towards old man Sandy Adams' house, with the evident purpose of turning his pursuers' flank and gaining the river. There he could steal another skiff and seek his safety in the town below.

Sam waited until Snake-Eye got a good long start, then ran down to the skiff, jumped in and began to shout, "Don't shoot no mo! It's me! Sam! I got de cotton!"

Buck's skiff came hissing through the water; the constable bounded ashore, crying, "Which way did he go?"

"Went dat away—" pointing towards a little church in the opposite direction from that taken by Snake-Eye.

"What sort o' lookin' man was he?"

"Lordee, Mister Buck, dat man pass here swif' as er speerit."

"White or black?"

"Dunno, suh."

"Terror will strike his trail directly; you pull down to the ferry—quick; send my horse, and Mr. Walters."

Sam burnt no daylight. Before Mr. Walters galloped off with the constable's horse, Sam had already roused a negro friend and begun hooking mules to a wagon. Every time those wheels turned over on their way to the gin he felt just that much easier in mind. The other negro cocked up his ears—"What's dat?" Sam knew what it was—the hoarse bay of a bloodhound—Terror had struck the trail; Sam gave the mules a nervous rap and the wagon clattered on.

It was nearly half past ten when Sam strolled into the store. "Mister Will, I done hauled six sacks o' dat cotton to de gin."

The boss looked up from his desk. "What are you in such a hurry about?"

"Well, you see, Mister Will, somebody stole dat cotton an' was gwine down de ribber in a skiff. I headed 'im off at Morgan's Ferry an' tuk it away from 'im. Den, bein's as I wuz right on de straight road, I jes drapped it at de gin."

"What?" The planter sprang up. Sam told it all over again—with embellishments.

"And the fellow got away, did he?"

"I couldn't take keer o' him an' de cotton bofe; an' I sho worn't gwine to let you be disapp'nted 'bout startin' up de gin wid dat cotton fust thing Monday mornin'."

The boss laughed. "Could you tell who the fellow was?"

"No suh, I can't say egzactly dat I knowned his favor."

"White or black?"

"Tell you de troof, Mister Will, it war so dark under dem trees a white man look jes same as er nigger."

"Did anybody help you?"

"Mister Buck Hines, he come 'long an' done some."

Negroes crowded in to listen. The boss gave Sam a good cigar; Sam settled himself upon a cracker-box, and embroidered his adventures. Suddenly he stopped, hummed and hawed in the midst of a peroration. Mr. Henry Walters had flung himself from a horse and came in shouting, "Oh, Will, they've caught your cotton thief. It's that peddler, Joe Turkey. Joe told Buck Hines—but we better go back in the office and talk." Mr. Walters gave Sam a mighty queer look as he led Mr. Will into the private office. Sam watched the door, and just as he expected, the boss stuck out his head and said, "Come here, Sam."

All of those negroes were eyeing him, and Sam started off with the swagger becoming to a popular hero. His bravado dribbled as he got nearer and nearer to the door; then he slunk through like a suck-egg dog. Mr. Will slammed the door and spoke mighty short: "Joe Turkey says you sold him that cotton—"

Sam staggered against the desk; Mr. Walters nudged the boss and whispered something in his ear—which kept the boss from mentioning the torn and stained five dollar bill that Joe Turkey insisted he had given to Sunlover for the cotton. "Sam," the boss continued, "I don't believe a word of it—these rascals always say that. You stay around the store until Mr. Hines gets here with Joe Turkey."

"Maybe Buck wont come to-night," suggested Walters. "I think he went to town with the prisoner."

"Sit down, Sam, we'll wait a little while and see."

Sunlover spent a fidgety half hour listening to every mule that plodded along the road, sick with the fear that Buck Hines might come. Presently the boss rose. "Well, Henry, it's after eleven. There's no use waiting any longer for Buck. Sam, you come back in the morning at nine o'clock."

"Yas suh." Sam edged to the door, poked out his head and jerked back with a gasp. Buck Hines himself came striding down the middle of the store, with Terror parting that crowd of negroes as a plow turns the black soil.

"Hello, Buck, we thought you were going to town."

"I was, Mr. Will, but I caught up with some fellows and they took charge of my prisoner."

Whenever Buck Hines had patriotically performed his sacred duty—thereby benefitting a private citizen—he believed in catching that citizen during the first flush of gratitude. Buck never figured on losing anything by letting the other fellow cool off. The five of them—including Terror—went back into the private office. Mr. Will locked the door, and faced the constable. "Buck, I understand Joe Turkey told you that Sam sold him my cotton?"

"—And paid for it with a ragged five dollar bill that had a smudge of red ink," Henry Walters added.

"Yes sir, that is Joe Turkey's statement."

Sunlover took the blind staggers and grabbed for a chair. Terror sniffed at Sunlover's breeches and looked mighty wise. Sam glanced appealingly to the

constable; Buck never batted an eye.

Mr. Will talked like a man who meant what he said. "Buck, I don't believe there's a single one of my tenants who would sell cotton that belongs to me; but for the sake of other planters I want you to satisfy yourself. What is your duty?"

"Here's Sam, let's search him," Buck suggested promptly. "If he's got that five dollar bill, it's a cinch. Turn out your pockets, Sam." Sunlover handed Buck his purse, which contained five silver dollars, and one silver quarter. Buck knew exactly where Sam got that quarter. "Sam, where did you get them five dollars?"

"I gave them to him," answered Mr. Will, "and I'm going to give him another five. There wasn't a cent in that cotton for him, and he took a lot of trouble to save it. Search him! Yes, go on and search him. Make a *good* job!"

Buck searched the negro thoroughly,

and announced himself as satisfied. "I was satisfied from the start," said Mr. Will. "Now, Buck, you've done your duty and here's a twenty for you. It's worth that much to break up cotton-stealing in the neighborhood. I'm glad to give it to you."

Buck Hines walked out with an imperceptible twitching about the lips which warned Sunlover not to speak about constable's costs nor about a five dollar bill with a torn corner. The blood-hound followed him, which lifted another tombstone off the mirth of Sunlover Sam. Sunlover exploded in a laugh which rattled the windows—the high-pitched, hysterical laugh of a man who has nearly broken down. "Mister Will," he gasped, "I sho wuz in er tight fix 'bout gittin' dat cotton fer de gin. Had to have a head full o' genuine brains; sawdus' wouldn't do in no sech case as dat."

**ANOTHER SUNLOVER SAM STORY IN NEXT
MONTH'S RED BOOK MAGAZINE.**

GAYLE HOSKINS is now completing the illustrations for the second Sunlover Sam story. In it, Judge Dickson tells Sam's experiences and troubles as treasurer of the church. It is full of the homely humor that makes this series the best Harris Dickson has done—better even than "Old Reliable."

There will be an unusual feast of good stories in the next RED BOOK—the March number, on the stands Feb. 23: A bang-up humorous story by Kennett Harris; another big character story by Michael Williams; a new Freeman Tilden laugh-producer; the usual A No. 1 contribution from Bechdolt; one of the best stories James Oliver Curwood has turned out; a surprising story by Ida M. Evans, and a number of other "bell ringers."

**THE GREATEST SHORT-STORY MAGAZINE
IN THE WORLD.**



Hid Treasure Farm

BY EUGENE WOOD

Author of "Back Home Folks," "The Honest Farmer,"
"Putting on Pinafore," etc.

PEACEFUL as any patch of ground you ever saw, was that little cove that Conrad Bowersox, owner of Hid Treasure Orchard Farm, stood looking at so intently. Although it was the season, the hills in which it was a dimple did not flame sensationally in circus-poster yellows and vermilions. Apple-trees merely turn rusty and show their shining fruit like big, red beads.

Equally unthrilling were the thoughts of Conrad Bowersox. No more blazing than the dull foliage was his resentment of Aunt Libby Harmount's "contrariness" in dying and leaving him that two-thousand dollars, not when he and his wife were having such a struggle of it at general farming, but after he had made a success of apple-growing; not in the early summer, right after the second spraying, when he would have had lots

ILLUSTRATED
BY
HORACE
TAYLOR

of time to take that money and build him the cold-storage barn that he was now planning, but just about the time for picking to begin.

However, even that faint feeling passed, and he had decided that he'd put the cold-storage barn up against the hill (some little excavating to do, but not such an awful lot) and then he'd have entrance on the two floors, the lower for apples, and the upper for ice for the cooling-bins. The spring branch that writhed like a green snake through the withered meadow toward Silver Lake, he'd dam, and in the winter—Quite unromantic, you perceive.

Yet pastoral scenery and commonplace intentions are no security against wild adventure. In that spring branch white men had washed their hands of white men's blood quite as an ordinary business transaction.

This cove was "Kinlock's Hollow," of fearsome reputation, away back in "the airy days." To the big double cabin that had stood hard by the spring resorted the Kinlock Gang, horse-thieves, highwaymen, and such bold, free spirits as, like a foam, float before the wave of civilization sweeping westward. It is said that old Abe Kinlock, clinking his hammer so honestly at his forge, was even a better counterfeiter than a blacksmith. And there were darker tales of how "lookers," seeking cheap lands, and carrying the money with them for their purchases, had been lured into the cabin to be seen no more. Murdered? Yes.

It was an age whose motto was: "Mind your own business." The Kinlock gang passed no bad money in the settlement. As far as horse-stealing went, their honest neighbors lost nothing by it, but rather gained some pretty good bargains. So why stir up trouble? But it is not only locksmiths that Love laughs at; it is also *Laissez faire*. Pretty Sabrina Dodd "got struck after" young Abe Kinlock against her father's sternest opposition. After that came the smash-up. Old man Dodd collected evidence of counterfeiting that interested the Federal Government. It was at Dodd's house the posse met, summoned by the marshal, to go and surround the Kinlock cabin.

They surrounded it without mishap. They found the door wide open. The fire-light showed not a living soul within. Things were topsy-turvy and inside out, as if the outlaws had snatched up what they could in hurried flight. Dishes of mush-and-milk on the table were still warm. Some one had warned them just in time. The posse had to content itself with setting the cabin afire, having first removed such of its equipment as the members felt they had use for. They stuck up a notice that if any of the Kinlock gang returned he would be shot on sight, same as an Indian. So far as known, none returned. As for Sabrina Dodd, not so much as the scratch of a pen was ever had of her. She must have given the warning and run away with her robber lover.

But with the ending of that tale another one began. Surely the Kinlock gang must have had a lot of money. The mar-

shal had thumped all around the cabin for a secret hiding-place for the dies and molds and instruments of counterfeiting, and found none. Raking over the embers showed nothing. They dug up the hearth, and still there was nothing. There was no fresh-dug pit. Evidently the members of the gang hadn't had time to get their hid treasure. Probably they meant to come for it.

In the effort to forestall them, the settlement went wild. Watch was kept night and day, and they dug and dug and dug. The ground around is all humps and hollows to this day, but all the benefit derived was such as comes from vigorous exercise in the open air, not so much prized then as it is now. And presently Ridicule, Romance's younger and less attractive sister, banned the enterprise with a snicker. Not until years after was there another attempt at it, when a renter cursed with the name of Pennycomequick and the possession of a book, a queer reproduction from mediæval times current in those days of the Middle West, and giving full directions as to how to call up the Devil, safe within a circle marked with the symbols of the Zodiac and lighted by a candle of hare's fat—until Pennycomequick began to delve, by night to escape laughter. But where there are boys going 'coon-hunting, secrets are hard to keep. And so, one night, Pennycomequick and his wife, sweating and toiling in the pit that they had digged, heard moans and groans as if of souls sure enough in torment, heard the clinking of chains, and, looking up, saw fiery faces.

Buried treasures are always in the keeping of evil "ha'nts." The book of magic told just what to say, and Pennycomequick said it. "Avaunt, ye cursed spirits, avaunt!" he bawled out to the boys, but Mrs. Pennycomequick, of more orthodox belief, rebuked him with: "Stick to your Saviour, Barney! Why don't you stick to your Saviour?"

The settlement laughed at the merry tale till it coughed, and the poor Pennycomequicks could not show their heads even at meeting without a chorus of "Avaunt, ye cursed spirits!" and "Stick to your Saviour!" until they simply could not stand it but picked up and left.

The two Spanish milled dollars Pennycomequick had turned up in plowing (it was they set him off) were still preserved as "relics," for the poor man had had to pay them out before he went. The story was well known, and it was because of it that Conrad Bowersox, seeking a striking name under which to market his apple-crop, chose "Hid Treasure Orchard Farm."

II

As Conrad neared the brow of the hill that slanted toward Kinlock's Hollow, a small, sallow man with curly black



"Avaunt ye cursed spirits! Avaunt!" cried Pennycomequick.

hair ran crouching along the fence to where he could signal to a big, sandy-haired man standing by a heap of smoke-blackened stones through which the burdocks shot their acrid leaves. The big man was so intent upon the study of a scrap of paper that he seemed to miss the signal. When he looked up and saw Conrad coming toward him, he turned and ran without a word.



"Well, I bedog my riggins!" marveled Conrad to himself. "Aint that a funny way to act, now?"

He could hardly give his mind to the consideration of his apple-barn for wondering what the stranger might be up to. All that afternoon he lingered within easy distance but saw nothing. The next day he caught just a glimpse of

the fellow but, the next day after that, his hiding in the hazel-brush and quiet creeping up was so rewarded that he got within a hundred feet or so of the man before an incautious stick crackled under his foot, and the stranger jumped as if he had been shot. Conrad came forward with the indisputable truth: "Fine day."

"Yes," said the fellow nervously. "Yes, a very fine day." He stood embarrassed

and then asked slowly: "Mr. Bowersox?"
"That's my name," Conrad answered.

"Er—er—er—my name is Kinlock," said the stranger, eyeing Conrad steadily. "Abraham Kinlock."

"Pleased to make your acquaintance," said Conrad but did not offer his hand. There was a pause, and then Kinlock said: "I expect you want to know what I'm doin' on your land here."

"W'y, yes, I do, kind o'."

"I was lookin' for somethin'."

"M—hm?" inquired Conrad. "Sumpin' you dropped day before yistiddy when you left, kind of in a hurry?"

"Well, no. The fact is, Mr. Bowersox, it's somethin' my folks hadn't time to take with 'em when they left, kind of in a hurry. That was a good many years ago."

"Oh," said Conrad.

"They meant to come back and git it, Mr. Bowersox. They meant to as much as anything could be. But they was hendered. Yes," he sighed, "they was hendered in a good many ways."

"I see," said Conrad. "They didn't think 'twas healthy for 'em to come back."

"That's the idy. And then one thing and another kind o' took their minds off of it. They seen a lot o' trouble, my folks did. I don't care to go into it very much. We ben a-tryin' to forgit all that, Mr. Bowersox."

"Mmmm!" groaned Conrad sympathetically.

"Still, at the same time, Mr. Bowersox, though by-gones should be by-gones, they's things that it aint business to throw entirely over your shoulder. Now not long ago I was to the old home place visitin' my grandma. I expect you have heard tell of her."

"W'y, I don' know's I *have*. Who is she?"

"Her that was Sabrina Dodd."

"Oh yes-yes-yes-yes," admitted Conrad. "Is she alive yit?"

"Well, jist about and that's all. Very feeble and porely. Well, she got to talkin' about when she was a girl, and this, that, and the other, and to make a long story short, I rummaged around in the attic in an old horse-hide trunk, till I found this here paper—" He made as if to take out his pocket-book, and then changed his



"I rummaged around in the attic in an old horse-hide trunk till I found this here paper."

mind with, "No, if you'll excuse me I'd ruther not show it. An old piece o' paper it was, yellowed with age, and faded writin' on it—"

"Tellin' where to dig?" interrupted Conrad eagerly.

"Well, yes. That and one thing and another. So I thought I'd come on. But," he sighed heavily, "you was too smart for me. Jist a few hours' work and I'd 'a' ben a rich man—comparatively speakin', that is. But you was too smart for me."

Mr. Bowersox," he suddenly called out in pleading tones, "could I have the permission to dig for that hid treasure?"

"Well," said Conrad, "as fur as that goes, you kin *dig* and welcome—"

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" cried the man.

"Only," interposed Conrad, "only what you find belongs to me. It's my land."

Kinlock seemed pained. He knitted his brows and reflected. At length he said: "Well, couldn't I buy this little patch o' ground, say half an acre?"

"How much did you say the treasure was worth?"

"Oh, on a rough estimate, I should say about ten thou— What do you want to know for?"

"Well," deliberated Conrad, "I guess I could sell you half an acre for about that."

"About what?"

"Ten thousand dollars."

Kinlock stood speechless for a while and then he said in a low voice: "You ought to be in Wall Street. It's a good thing for John D. he don't have no dealin's with you or you'd skin him out of all he's got. You're a keen, shrewd business man, Mr. Bowersox, but this time you was a little mite *too* smart. I bid you good morning."

"Hold on a minute," said Conrad, walking after him. "I might shade the price a little."

"You wont shade nothin'!" retorted Kinlock angrily. "I stood ready to pay you two thousand dollars cash down, in ready money, no checks, but the proper long green stuff. Now you don't get nothin'. Not a sou markee. But I'll get the treasure, all right, all right. Don't let that escape your mind."

"But it belongs to me. It's on my land."

"It belongs to who gets it, see? It belongs to who gets it. I know right where it is. You don't. It wont take me long."

"Don't go 'way like that," pleaded Conrad. "Why not you rent the land from me?"

"For how much?" asked Kinlock over his shoulder.

"W'y, like any other renter, half the crop."

"Huh!" scorned Kinlock, on his way.

"Now, looky here, Mister," said Conrad, a little angry. "I'll jist tell you sumpin. You come on my land and go to diggin' for valuables, and you're jist the same as a burglar and I got the right to take the shot-gun to you. Aint it worth anything to you to do business in a peaceful way?"

Kinlock considered a long time. "Well," he said, "s'posin' I agreed to that, what's to hender you from claimin' it all after I gone and dug it up?"

"Oh, well!" protested Conrad in defense of his innocence.

"'Oh, well,' nothin'!" repeated Kinlock with amendment. "As fur as I can see we'll both of us have to put up a forfeit. The two thousand dollars I was goin' to buy the land with, you'll have to match. Cash, understand? No checks. You might not think that mine was good. I wouldn't know but what you'd stopped payment on yours. Money talks. Put it in the hands o' some disinterested party, I don't care who, only he's got to know that we're diggin' for treasure, in cahoots with one another, and that we don't either of us trust the other. The widest publicity, I say. I want everybody to know about it."

Conrad frowned and twisted his mouth as if he didn't like the taste of it. "I don't know's I hanker for the whole neighborhood to be makin' remarks."

"H-a-a-a!" laughed Kinlock mirthlessly. "That's no hide off *my* back. I don't live around here to be made a mock of, same as that there Pennycomequick. Still, if you want this thing to be by and between ourselves—" Kinlock stopped and looked around. "Le's go take a look at that there holler tree. Now," he said when they had examined it, "what's the matter with you and me takin' our money and puttin' it in this here tree? In plain sight o' where we'll be workin' so's if airy one of us starts to grab the treasure, the other one can have the forfeit. Take it or leave it. I don't keer. Only I aint come this fur ways for it without havin' a try for it, shot-gun or no shot-gun."

Conrad stood frowning for a long time. Of a sudden he broke into an assenting smile. "All right," he said. "When do we start in?"



"Hurt y'any, Mister? Some o' them there roots is as tough as a clothes line."

"To-morrow mornin'. Or no, to-morrow right after dinner. That'll give you time to draw your money out. Unless," he added, "unless you keep it by you."

"Me? No sir," Conrad was prompt to say. "I don't keep no money by me. I aint a-plannin' to wake up some fine mornin' with my throat cut."

III

"Well, here I be," called out Kinlock smilingly, the next afternoon, as Conrad appeared with a team of horses and a plow. A road-scraping machine was already on the ground. "Here I be with my bundle. Where's yours?"

"They's jist a few little p'ints," said Conrad, "that I thought we'd argy over first. What was you 'lowin' to dig with?"

"Pick and shovel."

"Where are they?"

"Why, I thought I'd get 'em of you."

"Renter always furnishes his own tools," said Conrad with finality. "But, anyhow, what you want to go diggin' with pick and shovel fur? When your folks hid that stuff away, they must 'a' put it three feet under ground at the least calcula-

tion. That was in the 1830's. See that bank? That's ben cleared and cultivated up to a year or so ever sence, and a-washin' down on this place all the time. And another thing, if I might make so bold as to ast, where was you 'lowin' to start in to measure from accordin' to the paper?"

"That's *my* business," said Kinlock stiffly.

"Well, it's like this: You got to measure from some place, aint you? Now where from? The trees they was in your great-gran'pap's time is all chopped down long ago. That there holler tree we're goin' to put our money into, when the time comes, is second growth. The road's moved over to the westward when they graded it. What else is they to measure from but where the cabin chimney stood?"

"Well?" smiled Kinlock as if not unwilling to give away that much of his secret.

"Paper don't say nothin', does it, about the blacksmith shop?"

Kinlock considered before he spoke. "No," he said, "it doesn't."

"Well," said Conrad, "don't you go

thinkin' that there pile of stones is part o' the cabin' chimley, because it aint. It's the forge o' the blacksmith shop. The cabin set back more. Where is it? Under the wash o' that bank, all covered up with dirt."

"Well?"

"Well, all they is to it, we got to go lookin' for that chimley in a kind o' permiskus way. We know 'bout where it is. We'll jist plow and scrape until we find it."

"Yes, but aint you goin' to put up your forfeit?"

"Jist a minute. I was comin' to that. You're the renter, and I'm the owner. You git half the crop and I git half the crop. I s'ply the land and you s'ply the rest, the team and tools and such. 'Yes, but,' says you, 'I aint got no team, and no tools.' 'No,' s'I, 'you aint but I have, and I'm willin' to let you have the use of 'em for five dollars a day while the job lasts.' Now there it is. I don't put up no forfeit till that p'int's settled."

"Hokum!" exclaimed Kinlock in admiration. "Smart man! All right, Brother Bowersox, I'll pay you five dollars a day for the team and tools whilst the job lasts."

"I wont charge you but two-fifty for to-day," conceded Conrad, "because it aint but half a day."

"All right. Put up your forfeit and start right in."

"Who start in?"

"Why, you."

"Me? I guess not. You don't reckon I'm a-goin' to let you have the use o' my land and team and tools, put up my forfeit, and give you half and me do all the work, do you? Nix coom arouse to a Dutchman's house. No sir."

"But you haven't put up your forfeit."

"My money'll be there when the time comes," said Conrad, "as good as yours. Don't you let that worry you. But if you think I'm goin' to give you half the treasure, and s'ply everything and you jist set around and mind the flies off yourself, you're mighty much mistaken, that's all I got to say. I'll handle the team because you don't know 'em like I do, but you got to do the plowin'."

"I never had my hands on a plow in my life," protested Kinlock.

"Never learn younger," said Conrad cheerfully. "Jest set your bundle down anywhere. They wont nobody take it. Put your coat over it. In a minute or two you wont really need your coat. And say. We'd better agree on a story to tell. Anybody comes along and asts us what we're a-doin' we'll tell 'em we're excavatin' for a apple-barn. How's that? Aint that a good idy?"

From that on till after sundown what had been Kinlock's Hollow resounded to: "Git up, Nellay! Git up, John! Cccck! Cccck! Go on. G'on, John! I never see such a horse to stumble. Go on. Cck! Cck! G'on, there. Uck-oh! Hurt y'any, Mister? Some o' them there roots is tough as a clothes-line, and when they break and fly back and hit you—G'on JOHN!—I cripes! I got bumps on my laigs yit I got follerin' the plow when I was a boy. Geet up, Nellay! Twp! G'on John! Bear down more, Mr. Kinlock; you aint cuttin' no furrow at all sca'cely. Throw your weight onto it. That's more like it. I cripes! Wasn' that a tough old root? Whoa, Nell! Whoa back! I guess this is fur enough. We'll turn the corner here. Oh, lift it, man, lift it!"

Mr. Kinlock was naturally as florid of complexion as a sandy-haired man should be when he is also rather "fleshy." As the afternoon wore on, his high color deepened to a scalded red. Perspiration fairly spurted from each pore. His eyebrows proved a vain defense, and since his hands were busy with the handles of the plow he had to keep his eyelids in a twitter to flirt away the smarting drops. The plow as it tore through the root-filled new ground lurched this way and that, and battered with vicious thumps that sheet of straight-up-and-down muscle that the doctors call "*rectus abdominis*." His trousers-cuffs bulged with the loose loam, and bits of grit worked their way in over his shoe-tops and fretted hot spots on his soles. He ceased to converse interestingly of diamond rings, and other jewels, coined gold and pieces of eight. It took all his time to hang on to the plow that leaped and jerked so madly. Only the prospect of great gains at the adventure's ending stayed him through it.

In the hazel thicket a smallish, dark

man with curly hair, rolled upon the ground, seemingly in silent convulsions, beating the mosses with his fists.

"Jest take it easy, Mr. Kinlock," Conrad kept counseling. "Don't tire yourself out the very first day. Keep up with the team, though. Stiddy the plow more, I would. Then it wont hit you such awful welts on your stummick."

Sometimes an afternoon passes before you know it, and sometimes not. It seemed a long, long time to Kinlock before Conrad said: "Well, I guess we'll quit and call it half a day. We *could* work a spell longer, but y'ortn't to overdo. We'll go on up to the house and see what Ma has got for supper. I told her I expected comp'ny. Leave the plow and scraper here. Don't go 'way and forgit your money, though."

By the time he had washed up, Kinlock realized that hunger gnawed him clear through to his sopping shirt-front. Ma Bowersox had fried chicken, fried sweet potatoes, sliced tomatoes, water-melon, hot biscuits and honey, besides three other kinds of "spreads." These viands fell into a chasm deep and wide, she urging him with: "Hold your plate for some more chicken, Mr. Kinlock," and "Don't you see his butter's all gone, Pa? I never kin git that man to pass things," and "Eat hearty, Mr. Kinlock. It's all made accordin' to the P-yore Food Law." And when her guest felt crowded to his larynx, she reproached him because he really had not made out a meal but had just nibbled a little here and there.

Kinlock was not normally a man to whom nine o'clock says "bed-time," but he almost snored at the supper table. For all that Mrs. Bowersox was so interested in hearing about the Wonders of Life in Our Large Cities, he simply could not prop his eyes open to tell her. Not even when Conrad said, "You spoke about that man Pennycomequick this afternoon—how come *you* to know about Pennycomequick?" could he rouse to answer.

"Pore man!" pitied motherly Mrs. Bowersox, "I expect you're jist about done out. Coony, you ortn't to of drove him so. Yes, you did now. I know *you*. Oh, well, gittin' dog-tired aint an incyurable complaint, thank goodness. Any time you're ready I'll take you up to

Clarence's room. Clarence is the baby of the family. He works to town, drivin' for Littell's grocery. You may have noticed the sign there. He comes out every two weeks to spend Sunday with us, but I declare, I git so lonesome for the child I don't know what to do. You better let me have the light, Mr. Kinlock. You're so tired you stumble worse'n old John."

A proper story-book hero would have been alert and bright through twice as much fatigue, would probably have danced all night till broad daylight after breaking up new ground all day, but Kinlock was just a human being, and it took every grain of fortitude that he was capable of to keep himself from falling on the bed until after he had undressed and got into the clean night-shirt of Clarence's that Mrs. Bowersox laid out for him. From the moment he tumbled against the pillow he lay moveless as a log.

When she heard his heavy breathing Mrs. Bowersox looked up the stairway and said: "Well, law me! If he aint forgot to blow his light out. Pa, you go up and blow it out for him."

"Deed, I wont," protested Conrad. "He's got his money up there with him. No sir. I wouldn't think of it under no considerations."

After they in their turn had gone to bed, she whispered: "Hark! Who's that whistlin'? Sounds like it was that Mumma boy. He sees the light and thinks Clarence is home. You better tell him, Coony."

So Conrad rose and opened the window, shut to keep out the night air, and called into the darkness: "He aint here, Jake. He's gone to town."

The whistled call was heard no more.

IV

The next minute after his head touched the pillow the sun blazed through the window into the eyes of the big, sandy-haired man in Clarence's bed. He looked about him, suddenly broad awake, and smiled a little at the old-fashioned wall paper sprigged with roses, the brownish photographs in oval rosewood frames hung by red, tasseled cords, the steel engraving of Washington and his family,

and the colored lithograph of General Winfield Scott with dark blue hair, the cherry wash-stand with its one towel, slick as a fish's tail, hanging from one rung. He stretched himself between the fragrant sheets. This was comfort.

And the next instant he realized that to remain there would be to suffer poignant anguish. For, up the stairway floated the smell of coffee, and buckwheat cakes, and fried smoked sausages. Also floated up the subdued voice of Conrad, "Hadn't I better call him, Mother?"

"You leave him lay as long as ever he wants to. You aint in no such sweat to get the job done as all that."

"Yes, but he may be up and dressed, perishin' with hunger, and too bashful to come down till he's called."

"Be right with you!" shouted Kinlock, and leaped from his bed. Ouch! Gosh! Every joint winced at the shock. He was as stiff as a ladder.

When he had hobbed down the stairs, "Good mornin'!" called out Mrs. Bowersox. "Did you sleep all right? That's good. I held breakfast on you. Pa, here, was jist a-rampin' and a-roarin'. —Yes, you was, too. It aint mannerly to contradict, especially before comp'ny—but I told him it wouldn't kill us to have late breakfast even if it wasn't Sunday. I expect, though, you'd call it early, but it's prett' tol'able late for us—ha' pas' six. Draw up, now, Mr. Kinlock and eat yourself done."

Carrying his package of money with him to the spring lot, for Mrs. Bowersox, otherwise so willing to oblige, refused to take the responsibility of keeping it in the house, Kinlock urged Conrad to go to town and draw out his forfeit money, but Conrad said: "Time enough for that when we've worked down t'about where the cabin is. I passed you my word I

would, so what's the use of talkin'?"

That day Kinlock learned to respect the skill of what is called "unskilled labor" but which can fill a scraper with the loose soil and tip it over the dump so easily and without seeming effort. It is an act that exercises the *rectus abdominis* muscle.

"Git some o' that there pork off o' you," said Conrad jocularly, "keep this up a spell."

Just before sundown they came upon the charred logs of the old cabin. With a thump that cut him like a knife, Kinlock up-turned with the plow-point smoke-blackened stones and hearth-bricks. A gun-flint or two, a broken, rusted pair of



"Hold your plate for some more chicken, Mr. Kinlock."

scissors and the forlorn corpse of a clay pipe were other proofs that the level of the robbers' door-yard had been reached.

"Go at it agin in the mornin'," said Conrad. "Clear it all off with the scraper till it's time for the bank to open, and then I'll go and draw out—How much d'you say? Two thousand dollars? Well, I reckon I got that much, and if the bank haint, it kin send out."

If Kinlock had been half dead with weariness the night before, he was killed entirely this night. He was as if beaten with many stripes. He staggered up the long slope like a drunken man. Particularly he resented having to carry the wrapped up paper package of his forfeit

money. The twine cut into swollen, puffy hands, raw where blisters had formed and broken. Again he fell into bed to sleep motionlessly till day-light; but this time it was as if he dreamed some one was trying to call to him; he wanted to answer but his lips were paralyzed.

It was ten o'clock next morning when Conrad unhitched the horses from the scraper which had cleared off to the hard pan and left it like a floor, butting against the perpendicular bank on one side, sloping off toward the spring branch on the other at the "angle of repose" left by the sliding soil.

When he was well out of sight, a short, dark man with curly hair crept out of the hazel-brush and sat beside the big, sandy-haired man and heard him tell his troubles, what awful shape his hands were in, and how bunged up he was.

"Something fess!" commented the little man, sympathetically. "But look at me, left without a fi'pence. Say, Red, youse'll have to tell him where the stuff is, now, wonches?"

"Yep. Can't hold it back any longer."

"Course I don't know how it's doped out on the paper,—that's up to you,—but if it was me, now... Over here's the road, aint it? And here's the snare. They'd plant the goods on the far side, wouldn't they? So's nobody could see 'em. Am I right?"

The man called "Red" grinned and nodded.

The little man pushed some earth aside with his foot. "Hello!" he said and stopped short, staring. Then he paced it off from there to the stones that marked the chimney base. The big man was interested only in pulling at loose bits of epidermis on his hands.

"Eh, Red!" called out the little man,



"Hoffman is bug-house against guinea-fowl."

I'm satisfied. Let be, let be. It wont get away now after layin' there since 1830."

Clarence Bowersox caught his father just outside the Farmers National. The boy was full of a long story about the line-fence quarrel between Hen Leeper and old man Hoffman, proprietor of Chil-e-na, the well-known remedy for "that tired feeling." Hoffman was now far richer from the sale of whiskey and prune-juice than he had dared to dream in the days when he was a traveling oculist prescribing Chil-e-na for cross-eyes. The creation of a "country estate" was affording him opportunity to fling his money by the double handful. Hen Leeper's barn stood plumb in the way of what his architect told him was his loveliest prospect.

"He's crazy to buy Leeper out," half-whispered Clarence, his larynx drawn up tight under his chin in his intensity of speech. "He'll pay 'most any price. And Hen is terribly hard up. Them green-goods fellers got into him pretty deep, I reckon. But he's so tearin' mad at Hoffman he wouldn't let *him* have the farm for a million dollars. He wont lis-

beckoning with his head, "come here once. That look to you to be the same kind o' dirt as the rest?"

"Well, what if it aint?"

"Red Donnelly!" whispered the little man excitedly, "this is the spot, I'll take me oath. Let's dig for it while the mark's away."

"You can," answered the big man, "but it's nix on the dig thing for little Reddy. Don't let me hender you, though. Go to it, Jake. Enjoy yourself. But let me tell you one thing, my pretty child: When you go after hid treasure there certainly is one divvil of a lot of dirt to move. Huh? The longer he stays away the better

ten to him or anybody he thinks comes from him. Real estate men he sets the dog on. Tell you what you do. You buy the place, and tell Hen you want it to plant out another orchard. Git it as cheap as you kin. Then let it git out, so's Hoffman will hear it, 'at you're goin' to raise guinea-fowl, they's such a demand for 'em. Hoffman is bug-house against guinea-fowl. He can't bear the thought of hearin' 'em pot-rackin' all hours of the day and night."

"I'll study about it," said Conrad.

"Study nothin'!" cried Clarence angrily. "You got to grab it *now* before anybody else gets a-holt of it. Draw out that money Aunt Libby left you. Leeper wants five thousand dollars down, but he don't know no more about money'n a hog knows about Sunday. Get it all in one dollar and two dollar bills and count it out slow. He'll take two thousand dollars. And then soak Hoffman *hard*. Say, Pa, I get my commission out of it, don't I?"

"I'll study about it," said Conrad.

Yet when he turned into the Silver Lake 'pike late in the afternoon it was not from the County Road but from one that goes past Hen Leeper's place. The paper-wrapped package in his buggy he left at the house and went directly to the spring lot, where he found sandy-haired Mr. Kinlock alone and chewing pennyroyal as one that takes his ease at large.

"I had to see a party," said Conrad excusing his long absence.

"Did you get it?" asked Kinlock.

For answer Conrad pulled out his bank-book and showed on the right hand page the entry of two thousand dollars in the same handwriting as other entries but in a pale and yet unblackened green. "Up at the house now," said Conrad, jerking a locating head.

"I got the measurements all made," Kinlock informed him. "We'll finish the job after supper."

V

"There!" grunted Conrad, lifting his package into the hollow tree, and "There!" said Kinlock, duplicating word and act.

"Now then, Mr. Kinlock," the owner

of Hid Treasure Orchard Farm went on, "I d'know's you've had much exper'ence with this here blue clay but I'll jist tell you it's harder'n Pharaoh's heart. We don't want to be all night about it, so we'll do like I do when I'm a-settin' out a orchard; we'll use giant powder. It aint accordin' to the 'greement but I've got it and I'll s'ply it free gratis for nothin', without chargin' a cent. I'll do the techin' off of it. I'd feel easier in my mind that way. Giant powder's all right, only you got to look a little out, as the feller says, when you're handlin' it."

Kinlock measured off the distance with a tape-line from the chimney to the spot the little man had noticed in the afternoon. Then he took the crowbar Conrad handed him to make the hole to put the stick of powder in. The shock of driving the crowbar into the hardpan was painful to his muscles. From time to time he stopped. He coughed a good deal and cleared his throat.

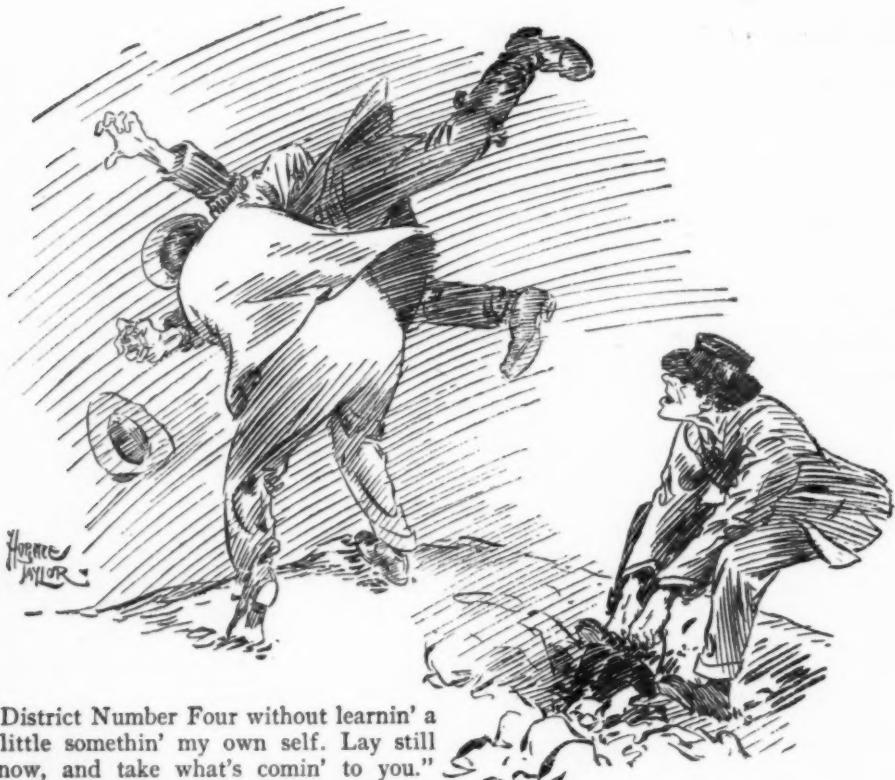
"Night air's kind o' hard on the bronicles," observed Conrad. "It affects me jist the same way if I stay out in it too long."

Imperceptible within the circle of the lantern's shine, but visible to eyes dilated by the dark, a shadow crept out of the bushes toward the hollow tree. Another shadow glided behind the first, and as the shorter shade put forth a hand and there was a faint crackle of paper, the second shade spoke. "You little fice-t!" it said. "Why, what are you about?" And then, "Hit at a lady, will you? I'll learn you!"

With a strong twitch of the little man's coat-collar and a knock behind the hinges of his knees, Mrs. Bowersox had him with his toes dragging and his head locked under her arm.

"You onry, slinkin' little thief!" she scolded. "I'm jist a-goin' to take and turn you up and give it to you good." Seated upon a log she thereupon administered corporal punishment after the classic model.

The culprit struggled and bit and kicked, but in the scuffle she got hold of an arm and bent it back of him in such a way that just an ounce more pressure and the bones would snap. "I'll let you know," said she, between firm-set jaws, "'at I didn't teach winter term at



District Number Four without learnin' a little somethin' my own self. Lay still now, and take what's comin' to you." Punctuating her remarks with a broad hand, she went on: "I sispicioned you was up to some devilment or other when I seen you through the spy-glass from the up-stairs window snoo—hold still, I tell you—snoopin' around down here."

"Hey Rube!" the little man screamed. "Hey Rube! HEY RUBE!"

"His name aint Reuben. His name's Abraham. Lay still. I aint done with you yet, my laddybuck. I'll 'Rube' you."

Just then the voice of Conrad cried out, "Fire! Fire! Fire!" which is the manner of them who set off dynamite, and then the next instant there was a bright flash and the firm earth underfoot jumped nervously at the loud crash. Following came a shower of pebbles and bits of clay. Fending them out of her face, Mrs. Bowersox lost grip upon her victim, who ran swiftly toward the light, weeping from pain and shame.

"Here! None o' that, Mister!" ex-postulated Conrad. "Fen grabbinses."

"Go to the dickens!" was Kinlock's harsh response. "Jake! Jake! Come here! We've struck it. Jake, where are you?

"I got it!" shrilled the little man.

We've struck it. Grab it whilst I hold the old fool."

"I got it!" shrilled the little man, tugging at something in the earth. "Aw, come loose, will ye? Darn the kittle!" he screamed in rage. "It's stuck. Uh! Uh!" he grunted in his frantic efforts. "Now! Throw him, Red, and gimme a hand to make the get-away!"

There was a thump upon the ground as Conrad went over backward, and lay still, and then the two men, leaning outward from their heavy load, staggered into the dark bearing the kettle between them.

"Oh, poor Coony!" lamented Mrs. Bowersox, running to her husband. "Did they hurt you, Coony, dear?"

"Well," drawled Conrad, sitting up and rubbing the back of his head, "I seen them stars they tell about but I reckon I aint what you might call bad hurt. I cripes!" he chuckled as his wife helped him to his feet, "I give that Mr.

Kinlock, if that's his name, a couple on the shin with my boots that must 'a' loosened the bark quite consid'able."

"I wouldn't 'a' thought it of him," mourned Mrs. Bowersox. "He seemed so clever and nice. Runnin' off with the treasure that a-way. Oh, well, they left their forfeit behind. That little tyke was reachin' for it but I ketched him jist in time. Unless—oh, my land o' livin'!" she gasped. "What if they's another in the gang?"

Gathering up her skirts she ran toward the hollow tree, Conrad after her with the lantern. "Hold it up so's I kin see what's in 'em."

A sound of tearing paper and a low moan.

"What's the matter, Mother?"

"Look! Jist a one dollar bill on top, and all the rest is cut newspaper!"

"The infernal scoundrel!" roared Conrad. "Let me look. You got the wrong one, Ma. That one's mine. Hen Leeper let me have it. Look at t'other one."

Alas! That also had a one dollar bill on top, and all the rest was cut newspaper.

"Well, I bedog my riggin's!" ex-

claimed Conrad. "Wouldn't that beat you! And get away with all that treasure, too. You might as well say 'all.' I gethered up a few but what are they amongst so many?" Poising a coin upon a finger of one hand and another coin upon the finger of another hand, he struck their edges together gently. Instead of the shrill ping-ing-ing! of silver there was a dull click.

"Counterfeit!" gasped Conrad. "Hid by old man Kinlock!" And then, thinking of the two men tearing their hearts out running awa with a kettle-full of bogus money, the Bowersoxes snorted out "Pfffff!" and burst into peals of laughter.

"Well," said Conrad, when he regained his voice, "I'm out, I reckon, close onto ten dollars for the use o' my team that them snoozers run away and didn't pay me fur. How much I'll git out o' Hoffman for the Leeper farm I can't tell till afterwards. But," he added philosophically, "I got the excavatin' for my apple-barn all done for nothin', and had some fun, too. I like to died watchin' that feller plow, and me not dastin' to crack a smile. We'll go to the house now, Ma, 'f you're all ready."



HEELS

by
J

EARL DERR
BIGGERS

Author of "Hats," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
IRMA DEREMEAUX

THERE came a time when young Sammy Downs found the village in which he had sported with baseball and wrestled with algebra too small to suit his taste. So his mother, dropping a tear on his winter underwear, packed it neatly in a shiny new trunk, and Sammy set out for the largest city in the state of his nativity. He announced loudly to his family and friends that he was going away to "see life."

Whereupon Fate, laughing a rousing laugh in her sleeve, took Sammy by the hand and led him where he couldn't see life at all, but could only hear it—clicking by.

In the basement of the Hotel Porcellian, prize hostelry of the Middle-West city to which Sammy came, there is a grill room ornate and expensive. Outside, in the palm strewn corridor, stands a cigar counter. Its case is filled with Havanas ranging in color from ebony all the way to birds-eye maple, and up to that case men frequently bring their friends with the smiling invitation to have a cigar. As they stand studying the price tags the smile dies suddenly. Newspapers may also be purchased there, in paying for which one simply multiplies by five the price mentioned in the upper corner of the sheet desired.



Sammy set out for the largest city in the state.

— DEREMEAUX —

Sammy's frank country countenance won the tobacco heart of the malefactor of great wealth who owned this stand and the one in the main lobby of the Porcellian. He bestowed upon Sammy a job. The job was to stand back of the basement cigar counter and attend to the wants of the smoking public.

Sammy stood. And over the head of the youth who had sought the city to see life, life clicked by, unseen.

Clicked is the word. For Sammy's cigar stand was directly under the sidewalk of one of the main streets of the city. The sidewalk was studded with little circles of glass. And on that glass the heels of the city folk played by day and night the symphony of hustle. Click-click, click-click, click-click. Life!

Sometimes Sammy glanced up. And if it was daylight, he saw "a moving row of magic shadow shapes that come and go."

One week, two weeks, three weeks, the tattoo of the heels spelled companionship to Sammy under the sidewalk. Click—click—click. Some moved slowly, as heels that went toward a dentist, a debtor, or a down-fall. Clickity—clickity—click—click—click! Some sped joyously, as to a lover, a loan, a laurel wreath. All day. All night. Click—click—

"Great Scott," remarked Mr. Goodfellow, manager of the Crown Theatre, pausing one day to light an expensive perfecto, "I should think you'd be climbing the wall and screaming in the dead languages, kid!" He looked inquiringly into the clean young face of Sammy Downs, with whom he had struck up an odd friendship. "Doesn't it ever get on your nerves? Nothing but that infernal click all the time?"

Sammy shook his head slowly, and smiled.

"No, I like it. It's sort of mysterious, somehow. I like to imagine where the heels came from, and where they're going, and who they belong to. It's all guess work, of course. But I heard a pair the other day I was dead certain came from a bankruptcy court, and were going home to—a wife. Three times I've picked out heels that had just lost a job. And as for heels in love—I know 'em on the second click."

"I suppose," laughed Goodfellow, "before long you'll be signing an affidavit that you can recognize people by the click. Reel off their profession, character, and standing at the bank."

"I'd like to think so," Sammy told him. "But—it can't be done. The clicks are all too much alike for that. But I can tell glad heels from sad heels. And sometimes I make out the regulars—those that go by at certain times. There's one pair in particular that goes down at nine in the morning, and back at four in the afternoon. A long, sliding, sneaking, sly click, with a walking stick accompaniment. And believe me, those heels belong to a crook."

Again Goodfellow laughed.

"I've got a little tip for the manage-

ment," he said. "They ought to put the guy that shines shoes here for a while. Something's got to be done to remind him there's such a thing as heels. The toes he shines beautiful to see. But the heels—say, he cuts 'em completely. They aint in his set."

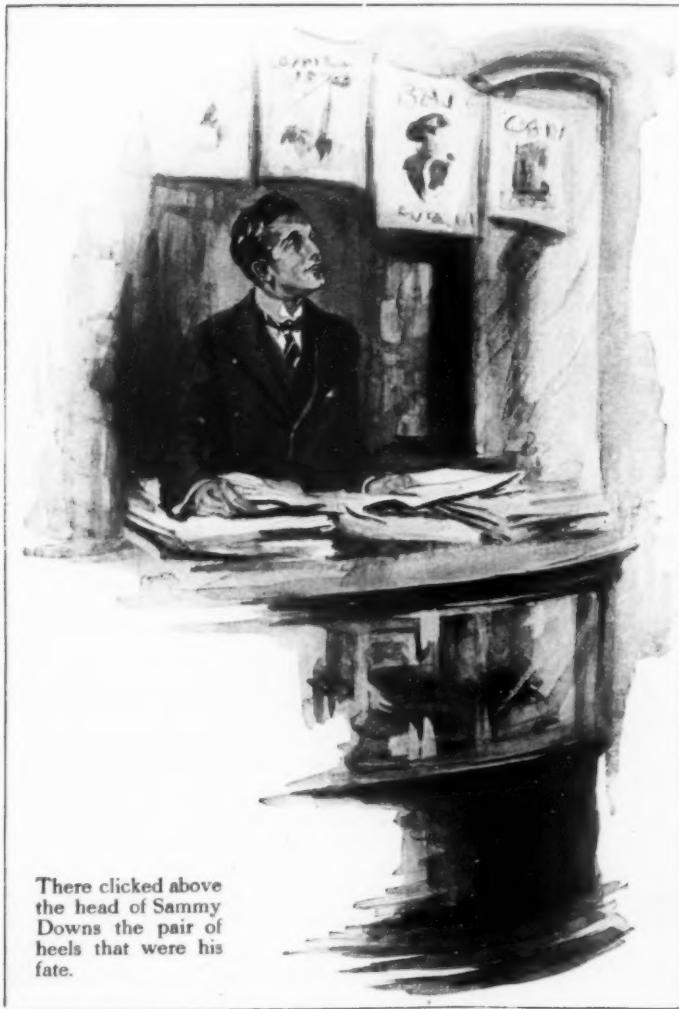
He held up a shoe in proof of this. A few minutes later he strolled away. At the cigar counter he left a thoughtful young man. Could he recognize professions by the click of heels?

For several days Sammy tried. But it was no use. He knew that bankers and vaudevillians, cooks and ball players, ministers and second-story men, editors and hod carriers, walked above. But they were only clicks to Sammy.

The football player whose goal kick from the field had won the state university's most important game passed daily on the way to the office which he swept out. Above Sammy's head clicked the heel of that foot which had been lovingly pictured on the sporting pages. Sammy never knew. The senator who had until lately bossed the state came to town. The heel that had long ground down a people added to Sammy's daily concert. He did not guess. But he could have told you, from the click, that the football player was disgusted with life. Which he was, for it is no joke to be an undergraduate idol one minute and a boy of all work in an office the next. And, by the same sign, Sammy knew that the senator feared for the country's future. Which he did, for insurgency had lately overthrown his dynasty.

For two months the heels passed over Sammy's head—strange heels, familiar heels. He came to have his friends and foes among them. Upon the sly, slinking heels with the walking stick he vented his deepest hatred. They made him first uneasy, then angry. When they went by he clinched his fists. They were the false note in his symphony of life; their owner was the villain in the show of magic shadow shapes which each morning staged for him.

And then there clicked above the head of Sammy Downs the pair of heels that were his fate, and all other heels could go unheeded though they clicked on the glass till the sound reached the ears of



the famous dead gaudily pictured on his cigar box lids.

This happened on a torrid morning early in August. At ten minutes of ten o'clock, Sammy was languidly reading baseball in the morning papers, when, faint but clear, there came to him his first glimmer of that melody of clicks. Clickity-clickity-click-click—oh, it's no use. Kindly imagine that the printing press has faltered and those clicks are barely visible if you hold the page close to your eyes. Then tell yourself that they represent music so sweet no composer has yet been worthy to write it. That's how it seemed to Sammy. Like thistle-

Since coming to the city an occasional face on the street had given him pause. At these times he had hazily pictured a neat little flat, and mentally divided the thirty per week he received to meet various domestic expenses.

But now—he felt all dizzy and gone and sad and happy at once. The electric lighted Porcellian basement was a celestial apartment. Life was a marvelous experience. He had heard a pair of heels click—a pair of heels he felt must click thereafter at his side. Hope thrilled him. Optimism buoyed him up. Ambition flushed his cheeks. He would climb high in the city. He was in love.

down skimming the meadow in a high wind, like wild autumn leaves racing down a highway in the starshine—so came and went, while you might say "Jack Robinson," the two heels of his dreams.

Sammy Downs sat for a long time with his lips parted, his gray eyes staring unseeing at dusty palms, his hand holding league standings that no longer meant anything to him. His heart had leaped to his thorax, and there beat violently. His cheeks were flushed. Love at first—er—hearing!

Sammy had never been in love before. Back home he had admired a number of young women to the extent of a church social or two.

All day he stood in a daze, picturing the girl whom those heels supported. Blonde, no doubt, with great blue eyes and a mouth that begged for kisses. At three in the afternoon Mr. Goodfellow passed Sammy's way, and the cigar clerk felt he could contain his secret no longer.

"Say, Mark," he called, "listen to this. Come here." He leaned over and spoke into the manager's ear, saying: "I'm in love."

"Who is it?" inquired Mr. Goodfellow. "Not the lady cashier in the grill room? Accept no substitutes, Sammy. Her hair and complexion are only understudies for the actors in the original production."

"Not her," cried Sammy. "I should say not. Somebody far above her."

"Who is she? What does she look like?"

"Don't know. I've never seen her. I've only heard her clicking by."

"Good night," responded the manager. "I knew this place would get you. It's you for the dippy house, Sammy."

"Not much," said Sammy. "You should hear her once. *Butterfly Heels*—that's what I call her. Ever hear Paderewski run his fingers soft-like over the keys? Say, compared to her heels on the sidewalk, the Anti-Noise Society could have him arrested for raising a racket. I tell you, I'm a goner."

Mr. Goodfellow regarded his young friend sadly.

"Too bad," he said. "So young, too. I'm sorry."

Sammy's face went white. Convulsively he clutched the manager's arm

"Listen," he cried hoarsely.

Mr. Goodfellow listened. And though he was forty-five, and his gay waistcoat was dangerously near the cigar case, and poetry meant nothing but comic opera lyrics to him, a strange smile came into his red face.

"By Jingo, Sammy!" he cried. "Well, well. Who'd have thought it? Yes, they're some heels. Sort of a wonderful click, wasn't it—yes, I'll give you credit for picking a winner. I wonder, now. The Packard boys' new musical show opens at the Crown, Labor Day, and they've asked me to find a few chorus girls here

for them. If the face and figure that goes with those heels is satisfactory there's a job waiting for that girl."

Sammy regarded him with displeasure. Though he liked musical shows, the life of the chorus was not what he would choose for the lady he adored.

"Nix," he frowned, "there's a flat waiting for her, and I've got the check for the first month's rent made out already."

"That's for her to say, I guess," Mr. Goodfellow reminded him. "Granted you're gone on her—how are you going to meet her? How do you know she'll ever click on your roof again? And even if she does—you'll never get upstairs fast enough to pick her out of the crowd. No, Sammy, you're booked for a leading rôle in *'The Story of an Untold Love.'*"

"Don't believe it," said Sammy. "I've got to meet her—I've got to. And I will."

"Maybe," replied Goodfellow. "I'd like to meet her myself. The chorus needs a few heels like hers."

He went away, and left Sammy overwhelmed by doubts and fears. Would she click that way again? The next morning he was too nervous to read baseball. Sorting his papers uneasily, he waited with wildly beating heart.

Nine thirty came. A quarter of ten. Ten minutes of ten. And then—the click—the soul-stirring click there amid the multitude of lesser clicks—and Sammy's smile returned after a long time away.

Twice each day for two weeks the dazed, undecided Sammy Downs heard those heels flit by above his head. They were, he knew, the heels for him, life would thenceforth be a blank without them, but how was he to meet their owner and tell her of the miracle that had happened? He puzzled over ways and means; he schemed; he contrived. Always he ended by just listening. What else could he do?

Mark Goodfellow, who knew no other home save the Porcellian, had told his large, blonde wife of Sammy's odd fascination, and frequently she paused with her husband at the cigar stand to learn how the affair progressed. The two genially advised, but their advice was useless. Mrs. Goodfellow insisted on one point—Sammy must marry the heels.

"Matrimony," she said, making sure her transformation was in place, "that's the real thing that makes life worth the six-sheet posters. And don't wait around until you've got a lot of money."

"I had three dollars and forty cents the day after we was married," proclaimed Mr. Goodfellow.

"Which, dearie," his wife reminded him, "is exactly three dollars and forty cents more than you had the day before."

"I know it, Kate," he said. "I married you for your money."

Sammy was agreed with Mrs. Goodfellow that matrimony was desirable, but still at sea. He could only listen, turning alternately hot and cold as the novelists say, to the click of Butterfly Heels in passing. Sometimes it seemed to him that in the *mélée* of heel clicks that went by when his lady did, he could make out a click that walked beside her. Then Sammy suffered the tortures of that world-old pang—jealousy.

And still, also, he heard twice each day the sly, slinking, unpleasant click and the tap of the cane. And the sound caused his breath to come fast, and his soul to rage in fury.

During the fourth week of his fascination a great tragedy befell. The heels lost their buoyancy. Where they had before played a waltz, they seemed now to play a hymn—sad, slow, thoughtful. What had happened? Daily their clicks became sadder, slower. Sammy's heart was as lead. Butterfly heels they were still, but of a wounded butterfly struggling pitifully along the ground.

He confided his woe to Mr. Goodfellow, and that gentleman was most sympathetic.

"Maybe she's broke," he said. "Now, that chorus job would be a great thing for her. I'll stand in front of the hotel this afternoon at three and perhaps I can pick her out. We ought to do something to help her."

Sammy prayed that the chorus would not capture his butterfly, and his prayer was answered. For at three-thirty Mr. Goodfellow returned with a fallen countenance.

"Couldn't pick her," he announced gloomily.

"She went by at three-seven and a

half," said Sammy. "And she dragged her heels. This is awful."

"Three-seven and a half," repeated Mr. Goodfellow. "Hundreds of 'em going by all the time. I couldn't pick her."

The next morning a strange thing happened. Butterfly Heels went by a little before ten, as usual. And in fifteen minutes she went back! If those heels had seemed dispirited before to Sammy under the sidewalk, now they were utterly hopeless. He was frantic with a desire to do something. The next day the experience was repeated.

And then, unexpected, unheralded, dawned amid the heat of late August the great day of Sammy's life.

It had been a very warm night, and he had tossed about on his bed thinking pitiful thoughts of the heels. He came down to the Porcellian after his breakfast at the boarding house, groggy and dull with the already intense heat. At a little before ten the heels that had thrilled him of old clicked by—the heels of his wounded butterfly—slow, unhappy. And in a few minutes they clicked back.

Sammy listened, his heart wrung. Pity, agony, longing, overwhelmed him. Half way across the walk clicked clumsily the heels that used to pass as thistle-down on the meadows in the wind. Half way—and they stopped.

Sammy looked up quickly. On the little circles of glass above lay such a shadow as a slim girl might make, lying where she fell.

In one leap Sammy reached the foot of the stairs, in another he seemed to climb them, in still another he was out on the sidewalk. A crowd had gathered curiously round something that lay there. The usual officious old lady was present. All fell back in startled surprise as a hatless, breathless young man dashed madly among them, and lifted the girl on the sidewalk in his arms.

He carried her swiftly through the lobby of the Porcellian, and laid her on an atrociously red sofa in the ladies' parlor. Then, for the first time, he caught his breath, and spoke to Mr. Goodfellow, who, with his wife, had followed.

"Why," said Sammy, dully, uncom-

prehendingly, "I thought she was blonde."

Mr. Goodfellow gazed with open mouth.

"Who—you don't mean—is it Butterfly Heels?" he stammered. "Well, what do you know about that?"

A doctor had offices in the hotel; he was sent for. While they waited, and Mrs. Goodfellow hovered solicitously over the girl, Sammy's eager eyes devoured his butterfly lady. The heels of his dreams had refused to click longer, and so had given her to him. She was certainly not blonde. Her hair was a soft brown—the very shade of the fifty-cent cigars in the case downstairs. And, despite its paleness, her face was very sweet to gaze upon.

The doctor came, and a moment later the girl opened her eyes. They fell first on the face of Sammy Downs, and there they stayed a long time. Sammy gazed back; he saw that the eyes matched the hair. Why in the world, he wondered, had he ever expressed a preference for blue?

"The heat was a little too much for you, I'm afraid," said the doctor, kindly. "A very bad day—very bad." But he whispered to Sammy and Mr. Goodfellow in a corner: "It wasn't the heat. She fainted because she was hungry."

Quickly Sammy fled to the hotel

kitchen, and returned with a cup of bouillon. He handed it to the girl on the couch, assuring her that it was the best known remedy for a heat stroke. She smiled on Sammy—the first smile, long to be treasured—and drank. The doctor departed to more fashionable and better paying patients.

"Now, dearie," cooed Mrs. Goodfellow, "as soon as you're strong enough, you must tell us all about yourself."

The girl looked at Mrs. Goodfellow; then at the manager, and finally at Sammy. A long, long look.

"You're among friends, my girl," pro-



claimed Mr. Goodfellow promptly.
"Speak out."

"I just—wasn't feeling well—and the heat—" began the girl. And if her heels had been music, her voice showed that there was a superlative of music as yet unnamed.

For a time she parried the questions of the manager's wife, and then she broke down, and cried a little, while Sammy looked on in deep pain. And at last she decided to tell—a plaintive little story:

"If you know where I can get work—it would help me so much. You see, I came to the city from a small town up-state because I wanted to go on the stage—to be an actress. I didn't know just how to go about it. But—I'm frightfully ambitious. My money was getting pretty low, and then I saw an advertisement in the papers—that girls were wanted—to act in—the movies. I went to the address—two doors down from this hotel—and found that before I could get a job I'd have to pay twenty-five dollars for four weeks' lessons. I had only about forty dollars, but he promised me a job sure—so I gave him the twenty-five. His name was Levy."

"Bill Levy," burst out Mr. Goodfellow, "as crooked as a Highland walking stick."

"Yes—I guess he's crooked all right," sighed the girl, the glory of her eyes once more on Sammy Downs. "For four weeks I took the lessons—from ten till three. My money—it went so quickly. Three days ago he was to get me that position. He said things were dull—I'd have to wait. I told him my money was gone. He was sorry, he said, but he couldn't do anything. This morning I went round, and he was busy with new victims, and ordered me away. And he said I wasn't to come back."

"The brute," cried Mrs. Goodfellow.

"See here," demanded Sammy Downs, "describe this fellow."

"Fat, with gay shirts and neckties, and a nose—"

"No," protested Sammy. "His walk. How he hits the sidewalk."

"I don't understand," said the girl. "He walks sort of sly and sneaking and shuffly—"

"With a cane?" cried Sammy.

"Yes."

"I knew it." Sammy's face was purple with excitement. "Believe me, I had his number from the first."

"Well, I guess that's the whole story," said the girl. "Not very new or exciting, is it? If you knew where I could get work—"

"Little one," broke in Mr. Goodfellow, beneficently, "your troubles is over. You've got a job. On the stage, fitting in with the dreams you had up in the backwoods. 'The Isle of Lingerie' opens here week after next, and you're going to be in the chorus—front row. Fifteen a week. And a chance at an Elsie Janis salary any time you develop that something or other—that Janis-say-quoy, as the guy says—that stars have."

The girl's eyes were very wide and bright.

"On the stage," she whispered. "It's just like a fairy story, isn't it?"

"With you in the rôle of the fairy—yes," replied Mr. Goodfellow. "Don't cast me for it, little one. My *embonpoint* wont stand for it. You report at the Crown Theatre to-morrow and ask for me. I'll give you a little salary advance now. Rehearsals—"

"Just a minute," broke in Sammy Downs.

"Well?" asked Mr. Goodfellow.

"I got a few words to say to this lady, in private," announced Sammy determinedly.

"All right," replied Goodfellow. "Five minutes I give you. We'll get out. But I want to say this. You've got a future, young woman. Bright lights and posters and all that. Think long and earnest before you sign any contract to click those heels of yours around a kitchen range."

The manager and his wife withdrew, the former holding his watch significantly in his hand. Left alone with *Butterfly Heels*, Sammy Downs wasted one precious minute gazing into her lovely eyes.

"Say—see here—I—" He had never proposed before. "Before you join the merry-merry, let me tell you it aint all it looks to be from a careless reading of the newspapers. It's hard work, and sometimes pretty uncertain and—and—a girl like you was made to look after some-



"And say," said Sammy, "there never was a pair of heels anywhere could click like yours."

body's happiness—somebody that loves you and that would try to make you happy."

"I don't understand," said the girl.

"It's this way," replied Sammy, gulping hard. "I love you. Will you marry me?"

"Of course not. You've only known me half an hour."

"Half an hour?" Sammy leaned close. "Say, I've been madly in love with you for five weeks. I've looked forward to hearing your step every day. You're the only girl in the world for me. Of course, you aint had time to size me up yet. You ought to have a long time to do that in—say a day or two. I'll let the answer to my question go that long. But remember—I've loved you for five weeks."

"You only saw me half an hour ago," she answered, lingering with that fact.

"What of that?" asked Sammy. "I've

heard your heels go by for five wonderful weeks. I've got a job—a good job, good enough to be married on—at a cigar stand down stairs under the sidewalk. The walk up above is studded with glass, and I listen to heels all day. And say—there never was any heels anywhere could click like yours. I aint strong on poetry or music or such things—I wish I was—maybe then I could describe how I feel about your heels. I've never heard a tune was sweeter. I've been a goner for five weeks. My heart's set on—you. I want you, *Butterfly Heels*."

"*Butterfly*—"

"That's what I've called you. What do you think?" He reached for his pocket-book, and counted out twenty-five dollars. "Take this while you're thinking it over. It's your money."

"Oh, I couldn't," cried the girl.

"It's your money," Sammy repeated.

"The money you gave to Levy. I'll get it back all right. The next time I hear those crooked clicks, it's me up the stairs and on that guy like a Kansas cyclone. Oh, he'll come across all right. It's girls without friends he robs." He stuffed the bills into her bag. "You'll think it over, wont you?" he begged.

"Well," said the girl, "it's sort of—funny. I don't know."

"If you've got any doubts about me," went on Sammy, "I'll refer you to Hillierville. They know all about me up there. The Methodist minister approved of me. But say—in a thing like this—it's just by looking and feeling, you know—tell me—don't you think—say—"

The girl sat up, and gazed at Sammy wonderingly.

"I think you've got awful nice eyes," she said.

"And a great ear for music—don't forget that," said Sammy in all seriousness.

Mark Goodfellow came into the ladies' parlor, and stood there.

"Well," he said to the girl, "I can expect you to-morrow at eleven, I suppose. At the Crown. There's a great future for heels like yours on the stage. I told Sammy that the first time I heard you go by. Didn't I, Sammy?"

Sammy Downs looked pleadingly at the girl.

"It was me," he said, "discovered the heels first. Don't forget that."

She blushed, but her eyes met the young man's smilingly.

"I've always heard," she said softly, "that findings is keepings. Haven't you, Sammy? He called you Sammy, didn't he?"



**ANOTHER SET OF "KAZAN" STORIES ARE
IN COURSE OF PREPARATION.**

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD is back from the Mackenzie river district with some bear skins and other hunting trophies, and with the plots for some more stirring tales of "Kazan," the wolf-dog. To those who read the three "Kazan" stories in the RED BOOK last year, no more need be said. To any who did not, we do not hesitate to say that those three stories attracted more attention among magazine readers and more envy among magazine editors than anything printed during the year.

Before he started on the "Kazan" tales, Mr. Curwood had one story which contained so much inspiration that he simply had to write it at once. "The Mouse" is its title, and it is a big, thrilling story of the far north. It's coming next month.

**THE GREATEST SHORT-STORY MAGAZINE
IN THE WORLD.**

Gold and Two Men

By

FREDERICK
R. BECHDOLT

Author of "Lighthouse Tom," "The Clubhauling of
Monohan," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY W. H. D. KOERNER



The Eskimo
grinned at the mate.

THE lamps in Mother Monohan's saloon were now dim, for midnight was near and customers had ceased to come. The red firelight flowed between the parted doors of the round-bellied stove; and in its path two objects stood out against the surrounding shadows. One of them was the ancient and rusted harpoon which hung among the mural decorations of the place. The heavy weapon gleamed, ensanguined by the flare. Under it the face of Noyes took on a brazen ruggedness from the glow of the flames. Harpoon and face glinted in strange harmony. And this seemed as it should be; for Noyes was a survivor of New Bedford's stern tribe of ship's captains.

The flickerings crept back and forth over his white hair and wide shoulders. We were all silent; and then he spoke. His voice had grown huge and deep on the quarterdeck; a voice trained to boom through howling wind and pounding surge like a bell buoy's signal note.

"Gold!" He leaned forward and raised his hand. "You spun that yarn of gold and a woman. It made me think of what I saw one time in the Arctic. Gold and two men.

"Twenty odd years ago! In them days Herschel Island was the end of the world. It seems like it ought to be longer."

With that he paused, as if he were satisfied with having recalled the picture —whatever it was—to his mind. He sat smiling, as one who looks back down the long vistas of the years, and sees large deeds played over in silent pantomime.

From different parts of our circle, voices urged him for the tale. He nodded, but he did not speak at once. After he had waited thus for the procession to pass before his memory, he threw back his head.

"All right," said he; and he told this story:

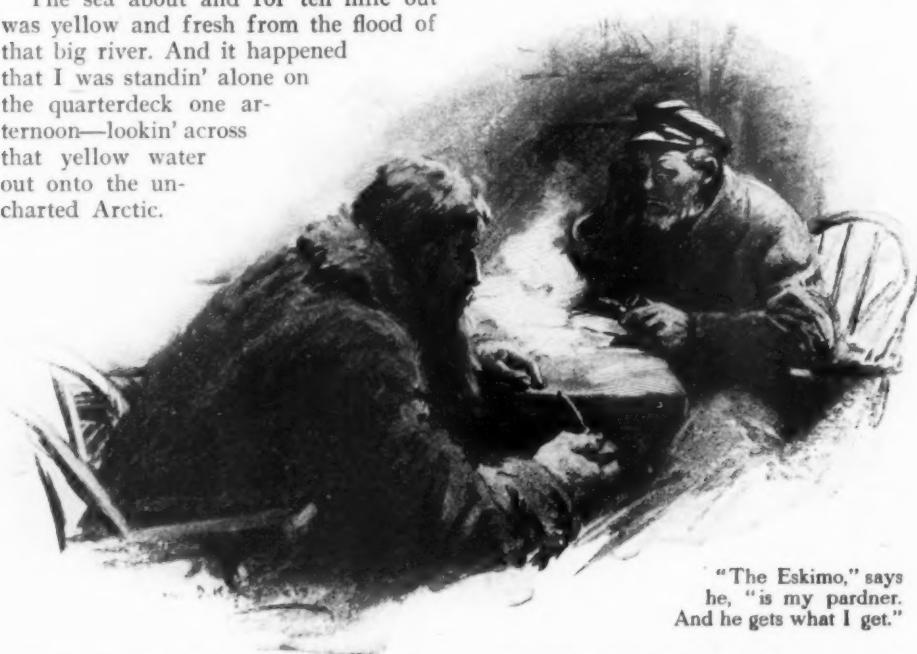
Back in eighty-nine I was captain of

the steam whaler *Nunivak*; and we were nigh the end of a two-years' voyage into them northern waters, hunting the bow-head and trading for furs. We had wintered the year before off Wrangel Island. Then we had come on east and we had followed the ice, getting our share of bone and blubber. Until now, with the summer at an end, we were ready for "Homeward Bound," before the ice should come again and lay hold of her. She was at anchor off the mouth of the Mackenzie.

The sea about and for ten mile out was yellow and fresh from the flood of that big river. And it happened that I was standin' alone on the quarterdeck one ar-
ternoon—lookin' across that yellow water out onto the un-
charted Arctic.

Now, ever sence I was a lad, I always had liked them places on the chart where there is no coast line marked—where the dark patches jest blur off into the white; and ye have to wonder. It was an old habit of mine of nights in the chart house, to pull out the blue-backs and study over them blurred places—tryin' to think what would be there where no man had set foot and no ship had sailed.

And as I stood there on the quarter-deck that arternoon, a curious thing hap-
pened.



"The Eskimo," says he, "is my pardner. And he gets what I get."

I was wonderin' what laid there—what lands and gulfs and all. I could see a stretch of open water; and here and there an ice cake, all blue and green. Somers up there laid the bones of old explorers' ships, where the pack had trapped them and squeezed them into splinters. And men said that the natives told of ancient floes that no vessel could penetrate; and of open waters beyond them floes again. And there was stories of a big lake along the coast, with many islands; and yarns of monstrous schools of whales, and of rich fur-bearin' coun-
tries. But no man knew. It was jest stories. Uncharted seas! I stood there a-starin' out onto their beginnin'.

Out of the emptiness there come a speck. At first I was not sure of it; and then it showed a mite plainer. I kept my eyes on it, for it struck me as bein' strange. It come on. I knew it was real.

I clapped my glasses to my eyes; it was a whaleboat—under sail and a-drawin' on. And arter a long time I seen how there was two men in it and it was laden low to the water's edge.

I mind well the way it looked that arternoon. Late summertime and the sun was dipping low now. Around the *Nunivak* was the roll of yellow waters—
ahead, the open, unknown sea. Way off there, the glint of the last sunshine was on some blue ice, so that the wash of the

swell dripped off of its edge like quicksilver. And still beyond, a-comin' from I did not know where, that little whale-boat!

When it was nigher I seen how careful the men had decked over their cargo with skins of the hair seal. And now I made out one of them to be white, for he had a long beard. And the other was an Eskimo.

My crew and the most of the officers had gone ashore. It was the season when the natives dry the salmon; and the men was feastin' on roast fish. They had some liquor with them—for this was before the days when the missionaries made things strict—and I did not look for them to be back until long arter night-fall. So, when the whaleboat run up at last and come alongside, I was waitin' alone on the quarterdeck.

In less time than it takes to tell, the white man showed over the rail. A tall man, big in the shoulders and with a long red beard all shot with grey. He wore Eskimo clothes of skins; and his face had been peeled and frosted until his skin was like a native's. He come alone—the other was down there in the boat—and he walked straight aft.

When he spoke to me I noticed how slow the words come, as if he had not been usin' his own language for years. And there was another curious thing about him; it was his eyes; ye would think they were two coals burnin' back in his head.

I asked him down into the cabin for a drink. He took one step to come and then:

"No," says he; "that can wait. I come a long ways to make a dicker with ye, Cap'n. We'll tend to that first."

All this time I was a-wonderin' where he had come from. I asked him what it was he wanted.

"Step over to the rail," says he, "and I'll show ye."

I went with him and he called down in the Eskimo tongue. The native pulled away some of the hair seal deckin' and I seen his cargo. The boat was heavy with baleen and furs.

"That is only a part of it, Cap'n," he says. "Now, do ye want to buy?"

I was keen enough, especially for the

furs. It was the beginnin' of the Frisco merchants buckin' the Hudson Bay Company; and we was after all we could get. So I told him I guessed that could be fixed up. He give me a queer, sharp, side-wise look; and then he says:

"There is one condition. I would tell that now."

I asked him what. He pulled a little poke out of the inside of his parka; he opened it and he took out a brass button—one of them kind a soldier or a policeman wears. I could see there was a dozen or so more in the poke.

"Now," says he, "if we can make a fair price on my cargo—and there is three more boat loads like this—I'll deal with ye. And I will say this: there is two black fox skins and other pelts that will make ye hungry to look at them. And a boatload of good, clean baleen."

"A fair price ye shall have," says I. "But what is that string on it?"

"A little thing," he says, "but it means much to me. And the man who buys my cargo must bide by that. If ye will wear one of these brass buttons and if ye will put one on the coat of every ship's officer; and if ye will give me and this Eskimo cabin passage down to Frisco; and will treat him as if he was a white man and an officer—not a common sailor or native. That is the string. Do that; and after ye have fixed a fair price, I'll knock off two thousand dollars."

I thought it over for a minute. I could see nothin' wrong in it. Only the cabin passage for the Eskimo; there might be some roar over that from the mates. When I said as much, he shook his head.

"Why do ye stick for that?" I asked him. "And what does this here brass button mean anyhow?"

"When we've fixed up our deal," he says, "and have got the stuff on board, I'll tell ye the hull of it. But that takes a long time. I'll say this to ye now: it is fair and above board. I pass my word on that. And I have furs cached three days sailin' from here that will make your eyes hang out when ye see them."

"Go and fetch them," I says; "and bring this cargo aboard. I'll do it, brass buttons and all."

"And treat the Eskimo like an officer," he says.

"Aye," says I, "like an officer."

He grinned under his big red beard and he pinned the button on my coat. When that was done he called down to the Eskimo. The two of them set to work unloadin' the whale boat; and when I seen the cargo on our deck, I was satisfied even if it was a strange deal. For the bone was of the best quality; and as for the furs, there was pelts there that would sell in London for four figgers. When they had transferred it all, they started for the rail. I asked them to stop over night, but the white man says:

"I've been waitin' long enough now, to be able to wait a while longer. And this is three days sailin' each way."

They cast loose and they started back. And I did not see them for a week. We did some huntin' and we was busy cuttin' up a whale when they come the next time. And I took care to have my mates wearin' brass buttons accordin' to our bargain. We took on their furs and the bone and some walrus ivory; and I mind there was a polar bear skin, the like of which I never see for size. I talked with the white man, but I could get nothin' from him about where he had got all of this; he was all business and in a hurry. So away he went again with his Eskimo; and this time it was eight days before he come back. For there was some heavy weather in the meantime. But they drawed alongside one arternoon jest as we had finished takin' on water and makin' ready for the voyage back to Frisco. By the time that last cargo was aboard and stowed away and tallied off, all hands on the *Nunivak*—from the fust mate to the rawest sailor that we had shanghaied—was speckylatin' about them brass buttons. The talk went round and round the ship.

But there was not much time for speckylatin' that evenin', for there was too much floatin' ice to make a man feel comfortable when he is ready for the homeward voyage. So we weighed anchor, and we sailed away to the west'ard, with the next change of course to be for the south'ard and the Golden Gate.

All hands was feelin' good; for a two years' voyage into the Arctic gets tiresome. Them two cabin passengers was the only quiet men aboard ship besides my-

self. They stood on deck side by side and I could see the white man a-pintin' things out to the Eskimo and explainin' them. When darkness come the two of them went below and set down.

The fust mate dropped into the cabin for somethin' or other. The Eskimo was settin' on one of the lockers. Of course the mate was wearin' one of the brass buttons on his coat accordin' to agreement. The native give him a look, and with it a grin; then he got up and touched the button with his finger and held out his hand. The mate, bein' an old timer and used to all manner of natives, grinned and shook hands.

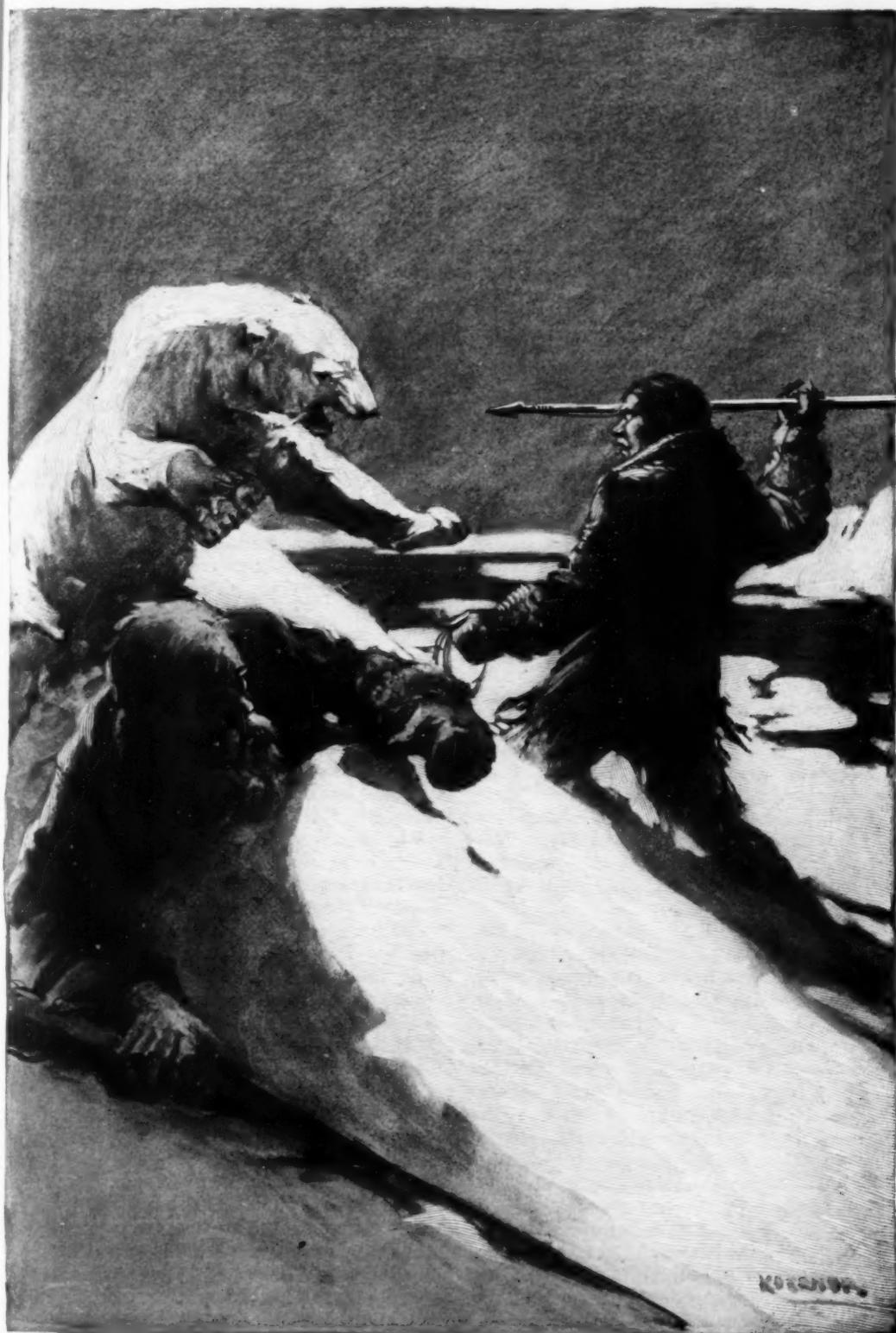
It was the same way when the other mates showed, a-wearin' their brass buttons. And, when the Eskimo set down to eat with us, I seen how he did not grab his food like the natives always do; but he was fairly sweatin—he was tryin' that hard to handle his knife and fork like the rest of us.

Them things made me wonder. But there was other curious facts about this Eskimo. He was a good head taller than any of his kind that I had seen, and his language was different in many ways. What was more, he was always doin' his best to speak English.

So, take it all and all, I was a-wonderin' over the feller. And I was waitin' for Chisholm—that was the white man's name—to tell his yarn, which he had promised me to do.

One night when we was two days on the homeward voyage, I set down with Chisholm and we cast up our accounts. It was pretty late and all the others was in their bunks, only the mate that had the watch; and he was on deck. Chisholm checked off my tally; and I give him the figgers as nigh as I could accordin' to what ought to be market prices. I did not give him any the best of it either, for the company had aimed to do their tradin' with natives and not white men. But he was suited. It come to a cool hundred thousand dollars. He set there a-lookin' at the paper; and arter a while he drawed a deep breath, and:

"Well, I got it," he says. He nodded his head three or four times and looked across the table at me. "I knew I'd get it."



"I stumbled, after woundin' a big, ugly female bear. He closed in with his spear and got the meat ripped off his forearm to save my life."

"Well sir," says I, "I'm keepin' my bargain. My officers is wearin' them buttons and your Eskimo is travelin' cabin passage like a white man. And now ye can tell me where ye found him and all accordin' to your promise."

He filled his pipe and lighted it and he set there smokin' for a while. And then, "It goes back five years," says he; "and it seems like it was longer, now that I come to think of it." Then he set a while as if he was thinkin'; and when he had done,

"The Eskimo," says he, "is my pardner. And he gets what I get."

"But the button," says I.

"The button," says Chisholm, "is a little thing. Ye will see that when I get to it. I have harder things ahead than that to keep my end of the bargain with him. Listen:

"Ye remember the bar diggin's on the Stikeen? I was at Fort Wrangel when a bunch of miners had come out and was spendin' their money. I was a common sailor, and my vessel was a-layin' in the stream. I watched them miners, and I seen them throwin' gold away. And it come to me how I had been a-battin' around from port to port and workin' for wages all the time, and gettin' nothing. And here was men—many of them not half as good as me—with their fists full of nuggets; while I had never held more than two twenty-dollar pieces at one time. I seen how it was—work for wages and stay poor. That night I deserted from my ship.

"I went inland to the diggin's; the gold was there; I seen it comin' from the sluices; but I was years too late; other men owned the rich ground; I prospected, and all I got in the bottoms of my pits was ice. So I turned to and I sweated for wages once more; but this time I saved a stake. And then I left the country and I started north.

"I went up the coast to Juneau. There was nothin' there for a poor man. I left that camp and I started over Chilkoot Pass. A dozen or two prospectors had gone over it the year before. I built a bateau on the banks of Lake Linderman and I traveled down the Yukon. Time and again I stopped and prospected; but all I got was a few colors. I went on

down stream; and I missed the camp of Forty Mile. I traveled on inside of the Arctic Circle. I left the Yukon and I went up the Porcupine. I had my rifle and my goldpan.

"I done as the natives done. Caribou and the salmon and ptarmagin was good enough for me; and berries to keep my blood thin. I spent a year up on the Porcupine; and I trapped. I sold my furs to the companies and I made a good grub stake.

"I was dressin' like a native now, and my beard was down to my waist. I had pretty nigh forgot the sound of my own language; and there was months when I did not even talk to an Indian. And there I got my idee of how to lay hold of my gold. It was not layin' in the ground for me; but there was rich furs, and they meant big money.

"Them furs meant big money; but I seen how the companies had Alaska corralled. And there up on the Porcupine inside of the Arctic Circle, I made up my mind to go on—on past where men had been.

"I crossed the mountains; I come to the Mackenzie River; I built me another bateau; I went down the stream. It was a hard trip and it was lonely in them big stretches of barren lands; and there was rapids the like of which I had never seen before. But I made it and I come to the mouth. I was on the shore of the Arctic Sea.

"There was a whaler at Herschel Island; I bought a whaleboat and I hauled it up and went into winter quarters. And when the spring come I took that whaleboat and I sailed out into the northeast. And this was the third year sence I had left my ship.

"Now durin' them ears while I had been travelin' I had often thought of gettin' a pardner. But no man that I had seen had suited me; for when ye are up in these latitudes and away from your kind, the other man must be jest right. That man had not showed his face yet. And so I sailed out alone in my whaleboat—out into the Arctic Sea.

"The ice went out; I followed it. I hunted here and I hunted there; and I done pretty well; but I was not gettin' rich. And the summer time come and it

passed by. And now it was the season of the salmon fishin' and time to get in the winter's grub. Here was I alone and winter only a few weeks away.

"Then I come to the shores of the great Eskimo lake that men tell about, but no white man has ever seen—only me. It lays with jest a strip of land between its waters and the Arctic and it is two hundred miles long; it has many little islands. There is fish and all kinds of wild fowl.

"I come to that lake and there I found a tribe of Eskimos. They was dryin' salmon for their winter's store. I beached my boat and I went among them. They were different Eskimos than I had ever seen before. Taller and better lookin'; and they spoke a different tongue. And none of them had ever seen a white man.

"They crowded around me and they made a big wonderment over me. I was like a king among them. I was able to make them understand a few words of the Eskimo tongue which the natives speak around Herschel Island; and for the rest of language, I had to make it with signs.

"I found their chief. He is this man—my pardner. I set down with him and he told me how they had tales from their fathers, who had heard the stories from their grandfathers, of men with hair and beards the color of mine. They believed us white men was a kind of gods. I figger it that the explorers that perished up beyond Coronation Gulf must of run afoul of thet tribe in the old days—or mebbe before that when men was huntin' for the Northwest Passage. For these Eskimo had come down from the north-east, where they had lived always.

"Now while the chief was tellin' this, he had his eyes fixed on my shirt; and the shirt was fastened at the top with a brass button that I had took from my store of tradin' trinkets. And when he had done, he up and asked me about the button. Then an idee come to me.

"Ye see I needed help for grub and to make a house. And I needed help to get my furs thet was to make me a rich man. And here was the man to give me what I needed. And I told him what it was thet I was after, and what it meant to a man thet had it—gold.

"But a native is curious. Ye have to give him something thet he can see and handle to make him understand the other things which he cannot see. A Siwash does not know anything about his gods unless he has a totem for to look at. Ye understand me? And when I come to talk with this Eskimo of power among men and riches and all that, I had to have some kind of a sign to show him—somethin' like a totem is to a Siwash. And here was this brass button thet he had been a-lookin' at and askin' about. So I made thet button out to be a totem.

"I told him thet the man who wore one of them was big; and he had power; and other men obeyed him. I said it was the sign of riches and all they gave. Only I did not say riches or wealth. Them Eskimos had no words for sech things. I explained thet part of it by tellin' him what wealth would give a man.

"Now of course when I told him thet, he begun to want a button. He asked me how he could get to have one. And then I told him thet I had more; and thet if he would help me do what I had come here to do, I would put one of them on his parka. I told him I had come here after furs and sech; and he must go with me and get them. If he would do this, I would give him the yellow totem and he would have all the power which went with it. He agreed.

"In the beginnin', when we struck the bargain, I was not thinkin' of what laid ahead. I was a-goin' to pin the button on him and he would help me. And thet was all there would be to it, too,—fool him, jest as white men have done with natives many times before.

"So we made the bargain, with me havin' thet idee. And I put the button on his parka. And the men of the tribe, they brought me food and made me comfortable; and I got my winter's grub and got an *igloo* built for me when the snow come; and got furs to lay on—and all without so much as turnin' a hand. And the ice pack froze solid over the Arctic; and the long night come. And the months went on, until at last the springtime begun to show, and the sun.

"And this pardner of mine went with me, huntin' and trappin'. And when the ice pack broke and left the sea open, I

seen it was time for us to get whalebone.

"Then I seen how I would have to make good with him. For this got me—him leavin' his people and havin' that faith in what I had told him. There was other things too—one time, when we was huntin' polar bear out on the ice, and when I stumbled after woundin' a big, ugly female, he closed in with his spear and got the meat ripped off of his forearm to the bone, to save my life. I seen where I was. I had a pardner. And half of what I got was his.

"I had give him thet brass button. And now it was up to me to give him the things thet the totem stood for.

"Well, we trapped and we hunted the whales. Us two together. We went out, him in the stern with the steerin' oar and me in the bow with the harpoon and the lance. And many's the close call we had in them waters. But we got much bone and we stored it. And we went over the ice fields to lands thet no white man had ever see; and there we found rare furs, until we had enough to make us rich down in God's country.

"Now durin' all them months of trappin' and huntin' he learned to speak English. And I told him about the ways of the white men and the cities. And I explained to him the power of gold, what it brings to the man thet has it. I explained it after the manner a man must tell things to a savage. To this Eskimo, gold is a sort of a charm; and it brings power and comforts. And because the brass button is the same color, he still thinks like he did when I first pinned it onto him; that is a totem which means the wearer has gold; and all other men will obey him. Ye understand now why I made my bargain with ye?

"Thet is the yarn. This summer we cached our furs and bone; and then we sailed down here, for I was pretty sure we would find a whaler. And the rest of it ye have seen. I am takin' my pardner out with me to give him the things I promised him. And I will keep my word."

With that Chisholm stopped talkin'. And I could not help likin' him better after he had spun his yarn. For there is not many men will keep their word with a savage.

So, durin' the balance of the voyage, I

done what I could to see thet the Eskimo had things the way he wanted. It was not hard. It did not take much to satisfy him. He used to stand on deck, and watch the mates as they ordered the crew around. And it seemed to make him feel good.

One day we steamed into the Golden Gate; and then of course there come a time when I had my hands full, seein' thet the crew was paid off, the cargo unloaded, and a hundred other things. So I did not get much chance to say good-by to Chisholm and the big Eskimo. They left us at the wharf.

The winter went by; and many a time I wondered how them two was gettin' along. And often I speckylated on how Chisholm was keepin' his bargain. But I got no word from either one of them; and they sort of went out of my mind. Then one spring day the *Nunivak* was ready to sail into the North once more. We had the crew on board and everything ship-shape, and I was settin' in the cabin. The fust mate come down.

"Man on deck wants to see ye, sir," says he.

I asked who the man was and he laughed. "Tell him to come down," says I. And a minute afterwards, there stood the big Eskimo in the cabin. I did not know him at first. For he was dressed, as nigh as I can come to tellin' it, like some country lad that wants to be a dude, and has the price but not the savvy. He had a derby hat and his stiff black hair shot out around his head in under the brim like a fringe of bristles. He had a bright blue suit of clothes, and a white shirt and a collar that was sawin' off his neck. He stood there a-sayin' nothin'. And there was a sadness in his face.

I asked him what he wanted; and he told me in good English, but speakin' very slow and solemn, thet he wanted me to take him back to the mouth of the Mackenzie. He laid down a handful of gold-pieces on the table for to pay his passage.

Now, I had much on my hands jest then and not much time for talkin'; and for all thet I was sorry for him because of the sadness thet was in his face, I could not bother too long. So I told him, short and to the p'int, that I could take

him ; but it might be a long time before we reached the mouth of the Mackenzie. And I told him thet he would have to bunk forward with the crew. For my bargain was done with Chisholm.

He nodded. "Good," says he. So I left him and went up on deck. And later on that day, when the *Nunivak* was under way outside of the heads, I seen him again. He was a-comin' up from the fo'c'stle. And he had took off every rag of them white men's clothes. He was in skins again, like any native. I could not help noticing how much more of a man he looked in them garments. He come on deck, and he faced torwards the no'th. And he stood there, a-lookin' at the sky's edge. He said no word to any man.

I went below. It must of been two hours arterwards thet I come up again ; and there he stood, still lookin' into the no'th.

Now the voyage was a slow one, for the ice was late in breakin' in Behring Sea. And every day thet Eskimo would spend pretty nigh all of his time on deck ; and always he would stand there with his eyes turned to the no'th. And he never said nothin' to no man.

At last we come to Herschel Island and then to the mouth of the Mackenzie. And there he left us. He went overside and ashore in a small boat with some of the crew. They told me thet he dickered with some natives and bought a kyack. And thet same day I stood on the quarterdeck and I seen him goin' out into the no'theast ; and I watched him until he was a speck.

I had noticed him thet mornin' when he left the ship ; and it seemed to me like he was lookin' more alive—as if some of the sadness had left him. But, any more than sayin' good-by to him, I had no talk with him. And so I stood there a-lookin' off into them uncharted seas after him, and wonderin' why he had gone back. After all, I thought, Chisholm must of gone back on his bargain.

Well, the summer went by and the next winter. And we cruised back and forth and it was pretty nigh a year afterward when we come to Point Barrow one day. I went ashore to do some business at the whalin' station. And there was Chisholm.

He was jest the same as ever, only his



Always he would stand there with his eyes turned to the no'th.

beard was trimmed down and he was more peaked and whiter. We shook hands and we talked of this and thet. And then I asked him about the Eskimo, and what was wrong. He shook his head.

"I'll tell ye," says he, "how it happened ; and ye can size it up for yourself. I kep' my bargain.

"When we left the ship, I took him up Market street; and he saw what was big wonders to him. We went to a big hotel and we stayed there. Now at the beginning, he could not keep his eyes off the bell boys and the policemen. Ye see they wore brass buttons. And it worried me some, to see him a-watchin' them. But it was all right. He seen men a-tippin' them bell boys and he told me about it—how people give them tribute. And he seen the traffic squad out there in the street; and he told me how when one of them raised a hand all men and horses and cars had to stop.

"Well, later on come the gold. Half of what I had was his. I kept it for him; but it was his and when he wanted gold, I give it to him. He was happy. He said that the yellow charm—that was what he called it—was mightier than he had thought. He used to tell me how he tested its power and it never failed him. When he wanted anything he got it. Now it was curious to see how well it did work out, too—and how he took it. He tried thet gold in a hundred queer ways, accordin' to his savage idees, and they all come right. And he begun to copy the white men. I managed to keep him away from whiskey by tellin' him it was a devil thet bewitched men; and so he did not go wrong or get into trouble. And he genuinely lived like a rich man.

"Many an evenin' I'd set down and listen to his yarns of what he had seen and what he had done, and it was wonderful sometimes to hear him. And it made me feel good to know thet he was happy.

"But later on it begun to change. He begun to get very quiet. And then I would find him a-settin' by himself lookin' out of the window acrost the roofs and sayin' nothin'. And he got so he did not eat well, and he seemed sad always.

"Then at last he told me what was the matter. He had figgered it all out in that savage head of his; and it come to this: The white men had got this yellow charm that give them all the things thet they wanted. But to get this here charm they had had to barter one thing. And what do ye think thet thing was? It was the open places and the fresh cold air.

"And he had bartered away them things jest like the white men. It was a-killin' him. He said so.

"Well, I felt sorry for him and I tried to cheer him up, and I did all I could to make things pleasant for him. But it was no use. He was gettin' worse all the time. And at last he asked me one day whether he could trade back again. And I see thet he was in earnest. So I sent him down to the *Nunivak*, for it was the day she was to sail. We shook hands and he said thet if he could get back there into the North, he would be happy. For he had seen our power and all; and he would rather have the other."

When Chisholm told me thet I understood it. But I did not understand why he was up here again. Says I:

"What was it ye come for? Are ye sick of the things down there like he was; and did ye come back for the open places and the fresh air?"

"Me?" says he. "No; I come back for jest a little more gold."



The Kid



H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

Then Christopher found a child beside the rivage of the river. And Christopher lift up the child on his shoulders, and took his staff, and entered into the river for to pass. And the water of the river arose, insomuch that Christopher had great anguish and was afraid to be drowned And when he was escaped with great pain, he said to the child: Child, thou hast put me in great peril; thou weighest almost as I had the world upon me. And the child answered: Christopher, marvel thee nothing, for thou hast not only borne all the world upon thee, but thou hast borne him that created and made all the world, upon thy shoulders. I am Jesu Christ.

Caxton—"Golden Legend."

BY the time the returning hounds reached Fallow's Copse, dusk was spreading across the country, and snow was falling. The day had been gray, livid even, and several of the Saxton Hunt had glanced up to the sky and foretold the fall. It held snow and darkness, as at other times it held light and sweetness. The winter lay sour upon the world, and at Fallow's Copse declared itself visibly, tangibly. The flakes descended fast, in a regular patter, soft as moths at first, and then plashing, as they felt their way, on face and hand. The runs had been long, difficult and ardent, and the Master rode in silence; as did most of the party. Occasionally the voice of the huntsman or whip was heard calling on individual hounds. In the copse the gloaming had settled drearily, and the brushwood mingled gloomily with the darkness. Aslant fell the snow, and Captain Sievwright, the Master, jerked up the collar of his coat to protect his neck. He was a big man of five and forty, clean-shaven and rather dark of complexion, with an emphasized jowl. He pulled up his horse as he heard his name. It was a woman's voice that came to him from behind.

"Sha'n't we go this way, Master? It's shorter."



Clad in night-robe . . . he surveyed the company.

"That Mrs. Bledsoe?" he asked. "Can't see anything in this blessed gloom. What way's that?"

"It's the off track by Sharp's Farm," answered Mrs. Bledsoe, as she joined him, her horse reeking and steaming.

"By Gad, I missed it. How the deuce was that, I wonder?" asked Sievwright.

There were five in the party outside the whip and huntsman, and they were



"By Jove, it's a kid," said Frank, staring with her. "What's an unfortunate kid doing here in this weather?"

all staying at Elhurst Grange, which was Sievwright's ancestral house.

"Anyone got a dry match?" called out a voice.

"A match?" another replied. "Who the dickens wants to smoke in this?"

"All right, old chap. Have one. You want cheering up." The speaker had come abreast of the second man as he spoke, and a light flashed for a moment.

"No, thank you—not I."

"Is that Frank, back there?" called a woman's voice from the front of the darkness.

"By your leave, mistress," shouted the smoker, in a gay voice.

"I thought you were with Jenkins. Come here!"

He obeyed and found a party of three at a stand on the verge of a descent.

"At your service, Mrs. Bledsoe," he said cheerfully.

"Frank, do you know which is the way from here?"

"Straight down!" said the cheery voice.

"Don't be absurd!" said the lady petulantly. "Don't you see we don't know. We've lost the track."

"I thought you said Sharp's Farm—"

But he was snapped up: "Oh, I've heard enough of that from the Master."

"Oh come, Mrs. Bledsoe, I didn't reproach you," remonstrated Sievwright. "I lost my bearings myself. We're all in the same quandary. If you don't know we'd better chance it. Anyhow, the direction can't be far out."

The party resumed its way, but the snow came thicker, blinding the eyes and making the murk a deeper riddle. Soaked and dispirited, they got down to the flat land and entered a lane.

"I say, this isn't the bridge," shouted



a voice which reached Sievwright. "Well, I didn't say it was," he said, adding grimly, "We can't bother about bridges now."

"We must have missed it by some miles," observed Frank, reining in.

The Master stared into the gloom. "That's the oasthouse by Shotting. We'd better get across there."

The flakes were not falling so thickly now, and a sort of shimmer lay on the landscape; they could discern each other as rude, blurred outlines; and behind, a confused moving, changing mass of shadow witnessed to the presence of the hounds under their escort. The lane ran out upon an open piece of ground.

"Shotting ford," pronounced Sievwright.

"Now we sha'n't be long," ejaculated Frank, and began to hum a tune.

"Hulloa! What's that?" said the third man.

"Where? What?" Mrs. Bledsoe asked, staring.

"By Jove, it's a kid," said Frank, staring with her. "What's an unfortunate kid doing here in this weather?"

He moved his horse forward, and swung off it, and the others also drew nearer. It was a child, bare-headed, meagerly clad, a child of four, it seemed to Mrs. Bledsoe. "What's your name?" inquired Frank.

But there was no answer. The cold was biting. Frank drew his scarf from his neck, and placed it round the child. "Here, youngster, put your hands in my pockets. They're frozen," he said. "Where do you come from?"

"Want Father!" The words came slowly, and as if with an effort.

"Looking for his father, poor little chap," explained Frank.

"Ask him where he lives," suggested Mrs. Bledsoe. Frank repeated the question, but there was no answer, merely the reiterated statement, "Want Father."

"He's strayed from one of the gipsy camps," said the third man, Elliott.

"Perhaps he's out of the village somewhere," said Mrs. Bledsoe. "Do you recognize him, Captain Sievwright?"

"Can't see for nuts," said the Master. "Here, Jenkins, come and see if you can make out whose this kid is."

The huntsman approached, marshaling his hounds, and peered into the gloom. "Don't think he belongs to the village, sir," he said at last. "He may, though. There are so many children. But I don't remember seeing him."

"All I know is that I'm perishing," said the second lady, Lady Lataine, peevishly. "Let's get on."

"We can't leave him here," said Frank; and suddenly stooping, he seized the child in his strong arms, and so mounted to the saddle.

"All right—straight away then," said the Master, turning his horse for the river.

The huntsman disappeared with his pack into the night, and there was a sound of splashing wafted to them. The Master's horse paused, backed and then, resolving that the water was all right, plunged into the stream. The others followed. The water was not deep here at the ford, for the river spread out rather shallowly, and barely reached the girths. Frank did not trouble to gather up his knees, but let the water roll up to his calves as he held the child before him on the saddle. The child was silent, neither called for his father now, nor made any protest, nor showed any fear. Frank thought he was staring at the water as if fascinated. The cavalcade attained the further bank and proceeded

on the way to Elhurst. At the Grange, the hounds turned off to their kennels, and the tired party dismounted and, handing over their horses to various grooms, entered the house.

The house party was not large. It included besides the host and Mrs. Sievwright and her sister, those of the hunting contingent, Miss Mitchell-Dene and Charles Forrester.

Forrester had a book in his hand, and was a slight, lean, rather dark figure in the leaping firelight.

"Safe back?" he said smilingly; and then, "Who's this, if you please?"

Frank held the child in his arms and now set him down.

"Waif and stray," he said, his pleasant face beaming. "What's to be done with this pretty thing, Sievwright?"

It was probable that Sievwright had forgotten the child. "Oh, give him to the servants," he said, and as he did so, Miss Mitchell-Dene came on the scene. "What a pretty child!" she exclaimed. "Whose is he?"

"This deponent knoweth not," said Frank, smiling. The man and the girl exchanged glances; they were fond of each other in the way in which modern society allows people to be, with unadmitted intimacy, so to speak. Sievwright rang a bell.

"This must be one of the villager's children," he said to the respectful housekeeper. "The poor kid's wet and tired. Better dry him and feed him and so on. Let them make inquiries."

"Good-by, little kid, good-by, good-by," sang Frank. "We'll find Father. Gad, I feel I could eat an ox, or part of it nicely prepared."

"I have no doubt you will in due time," said Miss Mitchell-Dene. "What are you reading?" She seized the arm of Charles Forrester, and peered at the back of the book.

"Lives of the Saints," he replied, laughing. "Funny book to read in this house, isn't it? I wonder where Dick got hold of it."

He was a cousin of Sievwright, and considered "clever," "rather satirical, don't you know?"

"Do you suppose we're all sinners here?" asked Frank cheerily.

"I never gave you a thought," said Forrester lightly, "though, come to think of it, I have been reading about a sort of ancestor of yours."

The party in the hall dispersed, the hunters to their respective rooms. Miss Mitchell-Dene stood looking at the huge wood fire. "What's the exact difference between saints and sinners?" she asked.

"The precise difference," said Forrester, "between any two colors that grade into each other. If there's blue and green, what's yellow?"

"The happy medium?" said she.

"Umph! It might be very bilious, according as you used too many sheep or goats."

"I don't think I understand all that," said the girl, still staring at the fire before which she spread out her hands. "Am I a goat because I like a good time?"

"No," he said promptly, "but what is a good time?"

She laughed. "Theatres, balls, bridge—ask me another."

"Why should I ask you anything? I don't know, myself," he said. "But I'm pretty sure all our definitions need revision."

"Don't say that thing about Life being tolerable but for its pleasures," she begged.

"No; I wont," he promised. "It's not true. And in any case we've got to define pleasures."

"Which," said Miss Mitchell-Dene as she moved off, "brings us exactly back to where we were."

He stood watching her till she disappeared, and gave ever so slight a lift of his shoulders.

"Which means," he said to himself, "that the average sensual man is good enough, but somehow doesn't manifest." He sighed, for Miss Mitchell-Dene had an effect on him. He was sensitive to many influences, and beauty among them. He was by way of being an authority, a refuge in that cousin's house, for Mrs. Sievwright was linnet-headed, and the housekeeper, meeting him on the staircase presently, consulted him.

"The child wont eat, sir, so I've had him put to bed. The poor thing's over tired and cold."

Charles Forrester recognized the feminine wisdom and offered courteous praise, as was his wont. It was a trait which had made him liked in life.

When, some time later, he entered the billiard-room, he found Frank and Elliott, not, however, engaged in a game, but lolling contentedly near the fire, and there he learned of the day's run. He was no sportsman himself, and found a difficulty in balancing himself on the edge of that grave seriousness which belongs to the class. He simulated sympathy, and opened his book. An interval of peace had fallen. Frank, immaculately groomed and dressed, smoked a cigarette luxuriously. Elliott puffed at a cigar. To them entered Mrs. Sievwright, pretty, fitful and flighty, and with neither human blood nor harm in her—only vanity and obedience.

"Tell me all about it," she said graciously. "Dick's dour and grumpy and silent."

"Tired," suggested Elliott.

It was Frank who told the story with a young enthusiasm, only faintly dimmed by his physical weariness. "What became of the kid, by the way?" he asked as he finished.

"Kid! Oh, yes," said Mrs. Sievwright. "The servants were bothering me about some child—a gipsy brat."

"It wasn't a gipsy," said Frank suddenly. "It was a pretty, fair kid. I don't much take to those dark things—overseas, alien business. This was a blue-eyed kid—a village child, I should say—regular Saxon."

"They multiply dreadfully," murmured Mrs. Sievwright.

Upstairs her husband had taken his bath, shaved and dressed for dinner. He yawned without restraint as he came out of his room, and was going along the broad landing with the Stuart pictures when he noticed a light in a room which seemed to him out of the usual. He pushed the door open wider and entered. There was a night-light burning on the table, and the room was in the faint, misty illumination of this. He wondered why he had come there, and also why the light was burning. The blinds of the windows were drawn; the light fell softly, quite unobtrusively upon the bed....



"It's off the track by Sharp's Farm," answered Mrs. Bledsoe as she joined him, her horse reeking and steaming.

Quite suddenly there came to him a memory: this had been Geordie's room, Geordie who was dead.... Was it ten years or eleven? There was a room opening out of it in which the nurse had slept. He remembered that quite well. Geordie! Geordie had died of— As the thought passed through his mind he faced the bed. Was it Geordie who stirred on the pillow in the faint light, rubbing his cheeks? Could it be Geordie who stirred and sighed?

He remembered the child by the river. Some indiscriminating ape had put it here.

"Well?" he said mildly, staring at it, as it lifted its head from the pillow in fright. He thought he saw the child's face move with fear, and it seemed to him that the lips framed one word—"Father,"—but he didn't know. As a matter

of fact he felt that for him, a typical and hardened fox-hunter, he was rather overwrought, and he wondered why, and was angry.

"Why the devil did they put the kid here?" he asked of himself as he made his way downstairs.

He threw off his thoughts as he entered the dining-room, where the lights and the blaze of the fire made a cheerful glow. The house party was already assembled, save for Lady Lataine, who came in with a bustle a little later, and was querulous. The exhaustion of the hunt bore down the gaiety of the table, only Frank discovering any elasticity. He, with Miss Mitchell-Dene and Forrester, bore the brunt of the talk, though Mrs. Sievwright intervened occasionally. The rest was—hunting.

Frank was not concerned with the run.

He was between Mrs. Bledsoe and Miss Mitchell-Dene, and Forrester talked across the table to him, gently ironic.

"Of course the main thing in hunting, shooting, fishing and all the rest of it is the scenery," he said.

"You're sneering," said Frank, flashing up to the encounter. "But upon my soul, I do enjoy it. When I fish, there's the feeling of the stream, the play of the shadows, the long, lush meadows—"

"What a rhapsodist is here!" interjected Forrester.

"It's a fact. I'm not so keen on the sport as you think."

"Miss Mitchell-Dene?" Forrester appealed for support.

"I'm no sportswoman," she said. "I don't like worms."

Frank went off into laughter; it tickled him to think that anyone imagined that you fished with worms.

"Hulloa!" he said, suddenly staring towards the door which was ajar. "What the—why, it's the kid!"

The whole table turned eyes, and there, for certain, was the child. Clad in night robes, with soft, curly hair and wide inquiring eyes which showed no fear, only wonder, he surveyed the company. The uncomfortable feeling he had experienced upstairs returned to trouble Sievwright. Who had brought the kid down? But it was Frank who solved the mystery.

"He's looking for father still," he said, and beckoned. "Come here, youngster. Poor little chap!"

The child approached him without hesitation, and put out a small hand, which the man took in his big one. He lifted the child to his knee, and reached out for some grapes. Mrs. Bledsoe, a good-natured woman of outdoor tastes, pushed a cracker towards him. The child seemed to shrink from this proffered gift, but accepted the grapes.

"Bolted out of his bed," said Elliott, as if the solution of a great problem had just come to him.

"We'd better send to see if any child's missing from the village," said Mrs. Sievwright. "Parkyns," she added to the servant behind her chair, "just see some one goes down to find out."

The ladies departed on the top of this

instruction, and the men sipped coffee and smoked the allotted cigar. Miss Mitchell-Dene had carried off the waif into the drawing-room, where he sat solemnly on the sofa close to her, with eyes wide-open on his strange surroundings. He slipped off the sofa and shyly sought Frank when the men entered, sitting by his new friend when the card sets were made. Ever and anon Frank put out a hand, carelessly tender, and patted the child's head.

"I make it hearts. Well, Younker, what do you think of it all?—Having none, partner? Bless his little head!—The other way, if you please."

At another table Lady Lataine plaintively bewailed her luck.

"I want a mascot," she said. "Captain Sievwright, send me the boy. I must have a mascot."

"Go to the pretty lady," said Frank ingratiatingly, and indicated the destination.

The child shrank in obvious reluctance, but finally obeyed the gentle pressure. Lady Lataine had pulled a chair up to her, and now seated the child upon it. "There," said she, "wish me good luck. Say 'lucky lady!'"

"He's no gipsy," said Frank from across the room.

"He'll do as well. I always must have a mascot, and I left my china pig behind," said Lady Lataine.

The game went on, and presently Sievwright, who was dummy, got up. "Isn't it appallingly warm?" he asked. "It's these new registers, Kitty. Look here, we'd better—oh, I'll open this window down there. It will let in a breath."

The room was long and spacious, but the hot-air apparatus had raised the temperature to an uncomfortable height. Sievwright walked down to the furthest window and threw it open. It was a French window, and opened on a covered way. Beyond was the night and darkness. Sievwright came back. "It's a lot better outside now," he said. "Snow's stopped, and the fog's taken off. How many tricks? Four. That makes—" He sat down and registered on his card.

Half an hour later Forrester entered the room, a book under his arm, and



Miss Mitchell-Dene had carried off the waif to the drawing room, where he sat



solemnly on the sofa close to her, with eyes wide-open on his strange surroundings.

smilingly surveyed the players. At Lady Lataine's table they were reckoning the gains and losses.

"Fortunate?" he asked idly.

She beamed. "Yes, my mascot—" She looked round. "Where is he? He brought me luck. I was losing till then."

"Where's is who?" asked Forrester.

"The gipsy."

"He's no gipsy," called out Frank. "Send him over here. Come along, kid."

"He's not here," said Lady Lataine.

"He's gone to bed. Did you tell the servants to take him?" asked Sievwright.

"No!" said his wife, who was trying to add up distractedly.

"Where is he? Where are you, boy?" Frank rose and stalked, a big, fresh figure in the room.

Lady Lataine was counting her gains; Mrs. Sievwright was yawning. Miss Mitchell-Dene rose and joined him.

"Did anyone see him go?" inquired Frank. "Lady Lataine, you had him."

"I—no, I don't know what became of him," said that lady indifferently. "I suppose one of the maids took him."

"He was sitting by you. You asked for him," persisted the young man.

"Is the child missing?" asked Mrs. Bledsoe, who had been talking of something else with her host.

"Gone! Yes." Frank looked about him with a vague sense of discomfort.

Forrester went to the open French window at the further end of the room.

"There are foot-marks here," he said quickly. "Bring a light, some one."

Several of the party drew to the window, and Frank flared a petrol matchbox. The light fell on the residue of unmelted snow on the veranda, and there were the marks of small, unslipped feet.

"He's gone out," said Miss Mitchell-Dene in bewilderment.

"You picked him up over the river?" said Charles Forrester interrogatively. "It was Christopherson, wasn't it?"

"Yes," said Frank. "I carried him over. I wonder where the poor kid—"

"He's gone to look for his father," put in Mrs. Bledsoe. "That would explain it. It was the only thing he said."

Charles Forrester stepped back into the room suddenly, and took up his book.

"Didn't I say I had been reading about an ancestor, Frank?" he asked in a curious voice.

"What's that, old chap?"

"Christopher. This is the 'Lives of the Saints.' You remember the story of Christopher?"

Frank stared. "You mean the man who—oh, what rot!" He turned away almost irritably.

"We must find the kid," said Frank. "Sievwright, get some of your servants out."

He had gone out into the veranda as he was, without hat or overcoat, but the others hurriedly made preparations for the search. The snow was mostly gone beyond the precincts of the veranda, and all traces of the small feet vanished. A lantern in the hands of some one at the French window drew Frank's voice from the distance.

"Try the path along by the bowling green, some of you. I'm going the orchard way."

The party moved forward, and split into two sections, beating the bounds of the garden on that side of the house. Meanwhile some of the servants were exploring other parts. Forrester, holding a lantern, found himself with Miss Mitchell-Dene, and Elliott; Sievwright and others with another lantern had gone in another direction. The snow had disappeared, but the fog was settling down again fast.

At the wicket gate which gave access to the park, Forrester hesitated. Was it possible the child had come all that way? Yet he did not know what to do save to go on.

"Wasn't there something over there?" Miss Mitchell-Dene asked.

"Where?" he asked in his turn, but the vague question sufficed to decide him. The three emerged into the foggy park, the lantern with its halo of luminous mist swinging in the leader's hand. They wandered in the open spaces of the park fruitlessly.

"I don't see what the mischief we can do," said Elliott hopelessly. "It's like looking for a needle in a haystack." Forrester hesitated. Miss Mitchell-Dene was clad lightly, though she had put a warm wrap about her.

"We must go on," she said firmly, and added in a tremulous voice, "There's the river."

The fret of the water was audible now, and they knew where they must be. The river ran for some distance through the grounds of Elhurst. They followed the bank now for two or three hundred yards, and then came out on a drive which crossed the stream by a bridge to the main gates of the park.

"He might have wandered down the drive," suggested Miss Mitchell-Dene.

"We may as well try there as any other way. They would know at the lodge if he'd been," said Forrester.

But the lodgekeeper had no news—had seen no one; and the gates were shut.

"He's in the grounds somewhere," said Forrester. "That's clear. Let's try back and follow the river down further."

They retraced their steps, and struck off down the stream again, having added the gatekeeper as a recruit to their strength.

Here the river ran in open country, not wide, but swift, and here and there with rising ground covered with trees. At the top of one of these ascents Forrester paused.

"Didn't you hear something?" he asked.

"I thought I heard a sort of cry," said Elliott. They all listened. "It's voices," said Miss Mitchell-Dene. "It must be the other party. They appear to be down yonder," said Forrester.

They began to descend, and the lodgekeeper murmured something in Forrester's ears. "Look out here," said the latter. "We've got to be careful. There's a steep bit of bank, and the river swirls under it."

The parties, if they could judge by sounds, seemed to be converging.

"I know the track they're following," said Forrester. "It goes down by the river to the boat-house."

Unconsciously they hastened their steps. "Back please, sir!" called out the lodge-keeper suddenly.

Forrester came to a pause, and swung his lantern. They could see, below, a gray swirl of water.

"Ugly!" commented Elliott. "Good Lord, supposing—"

It was Miss Mitchell-Dene who interrupted with a cry. "There's a footmark! Look!"

Forrester lowered the lantern. "It is!" he said. "On the verge! My God!"

There was a momentary silence, and then Forrester moved.

"It may not have gone over," he said rather brokenly.

"It might be any footmark," said Elliott.

"So it might—of course." The remark of the plain, unimaginative man seemed to restore their confidence. They went on; and now the lights of the other party were flashing ahead. Forrester hailed them, and was answered.

"Found him?"—"No—any sign?"—"No!"

The river broadened towards the weir, over which the waste water poured with a roar, a roar that now drowned all sounds save that of a great shout which rose from the advanced party. Forrester's party quickened their pace, and the two commingled on the bank.

"There! there!" Meadows was crying. "Don't you see?"

One of the servants stirred the rough, lashing water with a pole aimlessly.

"What is it? Oh, what is it?" asked Miss Mitchell-Dene.

"He sees something," answered back Forrester.

"What is it? What is it?" she repeated; she was standing on the marge of the water, distracted.

"It's a body—a man's," said one of the servants.

"Nonsense," said Sievwright. "It's rubbish brought down by the river and caught there. What mah?"

Suddenly Miss Mitchell-Dene's voice was heard demanding, "Where's Mr. Christopherson? Where's Mr. Christopherson?"

"Is Frank here?" asked Forrester.

Sievwright answered in the negative. "We haven't seen him. He's probably searching at the back of the park."

"He's there!" cried the girl, pointing. "Oh, bring him out. He's there!"

"It's only some rubbish caught—" began Sievwright, and broke off. "My God!" It seemed to him as if the rubbish moved.

Captain Sievwright M.F.H. was a dull person of no parts to speak of, but he was a soldier and a man accustomed to decisive action. Item: he did not know fear.

"Give me that," he said, and snatched the pole from the servant's hands. He stepped without haste upon the masonry which projected into the water, and here opened in a sluice to allow the held water to collect for the navigation of boats, crossed it, and seizing the wooden rail which ran across the weir, supported himself on the submerged structure which made the water fall. He was swallowed breast-high, but by means of the pole kept his balance, until he reached the breach which the torrent of waters had made in the bed of the structure. A body held up by the railings bobbed and moved in the rush.

He shouted back orders which the roar of the water seemed to overpower. Then, holding tight to his support, he pulled at an arm of the body. To his amazement something came away, something that had been resting on the body above the water. It was a child!

He turned and shouted again, but already the lodge-keeper, who also kept the waters, was half-way to him. When the latter had arrived he handed over the child.

"Get to shore; and let the boat down on us. There's more here."

He pulled again at the body against the weir, and managed to hold the head out of the torrent, but it was only when his arms were aching past endurance that the boat reached him. A light was flashed on the body from a lantern.

"It is Frank," said Sievwright.

"Is he gone?" asked Forrester, horror-struck, but Sievwright had set to work like a man of action.

Christopherson was laid upon the turf pending the arrival of the motor-car

which had been sent for. Sievwright was still at work, though he was himself dripping from his waist downwards. Elliott had the rescued child, wrapped in an overcoat; Miss Mitchell-Dene knelt on the wet grass unconscious of everything save of the life that flickered on the pallid face, as if reluctant to return.

"They must have gone over where we saw," Elliott was saying in a low voice.

"The child must have gone over, and Frank followed," said Forrester in the same tone.

"He seems to have kept the child above water somehow, even after he succumbed himself," said Elliott.

"Thank God!" said Sievwright suddenly with a sigh, and ceased his work.

"He's come round!" cried Forrester.

"I wish some one had some brandy," said Sievwright. "I could do with some myself."

Forrester almost hysterically clapped him on the back. The hum of the motor was audible.

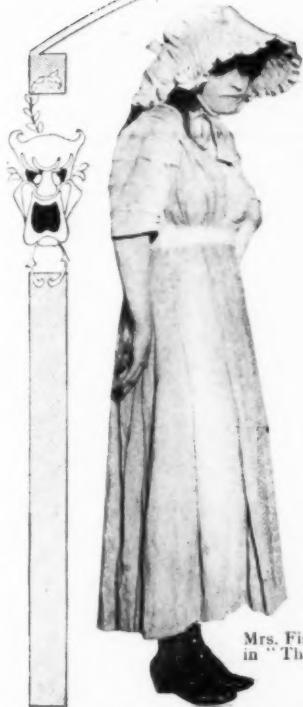
Miss Mitchell-Dene, still on her knees, was now nearer to the prostrate figure. The lips twitched; she had one of the hands in hers, chafing it softly, and she stared at the awakening face. She did not hear the motor stop, nor the voices talking; some one leaned down on the other side, and applied a flask to Christopherson's mouth, then rose. Dimly she heard the words from somewhere:

"The kid's all right. Father missed him. Drove over from Saxton distracted. We must get them in the car." Frank's eyes opened, and a woman's face was close above him.

"Sylvia!" he said weakly. "Where's the kid?" And then, "Is that you, dearest?"

Miss Mitchell-Dene sobbed aloud, but it was a sob of joy and something more incommunicable.

New Plays and Players



Mrs. Fiske
in "The High Road."

by

LOUIS
V.
DEFOE

IT was to Mrs. Fiske's acting in "Salvation Nell" that Edward Sheldon owed the first favorable attention he received from the theatre-going world. Her performance of the slum woman who became a charity worker vitalized that drama and gave to it an appealing interest which with almost any other actress in the rôle it would never have enjoyed. And now, six years later, Mr. Sheldon has justified Mrs. Fiske's early confidence in his ability by creating in *Mary Page*, the heroine of his new play, "The High Road," a character of much more complex nature, which is better suited to display her versatility and technical proficiency than any other in which she has appeared since the days of "Tess" and "Leah Kleschna."

As to the merits of "The High Road" as a play opinions will be sure to differ. Its exaggerations of character and improbabilities of incident will weaken its interest for those not blinded by surface

theatrical effect. They will also perceive that it is a mosaic of dramatic situations which for years have been the common property of the theatre. The heroine who transgresses the moral law and is punished by being stretched for torture upon an inquisitorial rack is surely no unfamiliar figure on the stage.

But in spite of its borrowed situations and artifices there are sound sense and vigorous truth in "The High Road" and its old episodes freshly served up are undoubtedly effective. The dialogue is always fluently written and the characterizations for the most part are deft. To me *Mary Page*, whose career the story traces through twenty-three years—a pilgrimage in five parts, the author calls it,—is the best type in any recent play which champions the cause of woman in her struggle to enter a broader sphere of activity.

The picturesque scene in the Catskill Mountains with which the story opens gives an inkling of the conditions sur-



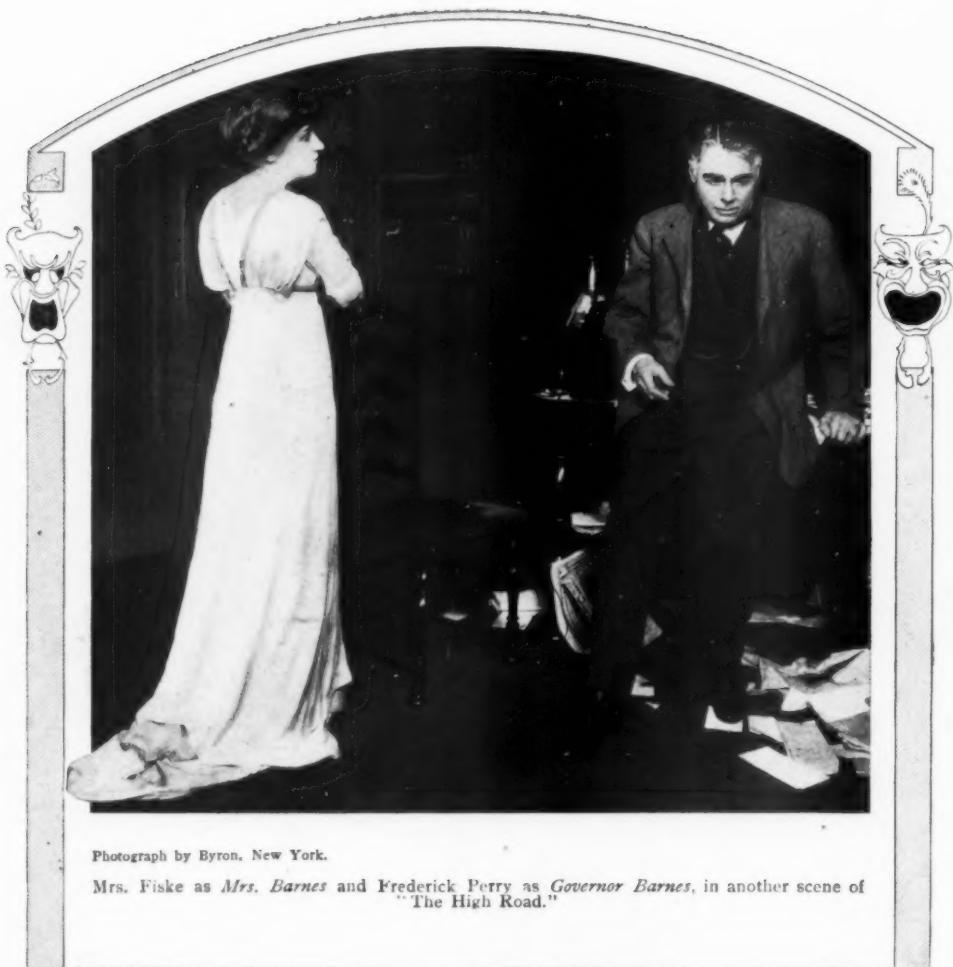
Photograph by Byron, New York.

Charles Waldron as *Alan Wilson* and Mrs. Fiske as *Mary Page*, when they met at the girl's mountain home, in "The High Road."



Photograph by Byron, New York.

Frederick Perry as *Winfield Barnes*, and Mrs. Fiske as *Mrs. Barnes*, after *Mrs. Barnes'* past has begun to cloud her husband's future, in "The High Road."



Photograph by Byron, New York.

Mrs. Fiske as *Mrs. Barnes* and Frederick Perry as *Governor Barnes*, in another scene of
"The High Road."

rounding *Mary* during the first seventeen years of her life. She is a rural *Cinderella*, a motherless, brow-beaten farmhouse drudge, whose bigoted, miserly father has abused her until she has become rebellious against the hard circumstances of her existence. Romantic and visionary by nature, she easily falls victim to the fascinations of *Alan Wilson*, a rich young artist from New York who has been lodging at her father's house while sketching in the neighborhood. So alluringly does he describe the world which lies beyond her mountain horizon that she yields to his tempting when he asks her to run away with him. Before she turns her back upon the farmhouse another figure crosses her path. He is *Winfield Barnes*, the young village

lawyer, who has felt the same longing for freedom and has resolved to go out into the world of big affairs.

Three years pass and then comes the second part of *Mary's* pilgrimage. Although not married to *Alan Wilson*, she has traveled in Europe as his companion and eventually has come back to live in the beautiful apartment which he has fitted up for her in New York. But the luxuries he provides do not bring the expected happiness into her life. For relief she absorbs socialistic literature and turns her attention to the problems of the working classes. Her studies bring about her moral awakening and influence her to leave the fool's paradise in which she has dwelt, and take up a life of honest toil among the underpaid shirtwaist

makers in the lower parts of the city.

Mary has planned to escape from the apartment during *Wilson's* absence, leaving a letter to explain her action. She has already sent away her few personal belongings and is about to depart when he returns, bringing *John Maddock*, the son of a rich capitalist who is just setting out on a newspaper career which is to eventuate in a string of publications stretching across the continent. That chance meeting with *Maddock* is most unfortunate for *Mary*. His memory of it is destined to play a tragic part in her future life.

After the guest leaves she frankly tells *Wilson* her intentions. He pleads with her to remain, points out that he has been faithful to her and offers to legalize their companionship by marriage. But she refuses to continue her loveless life with him as his wife, and when he upbraids her for her lack of gratitude, indignantly leaves the house.

It is eighteen years later when the thread of *Mary's* life is again taken up. The scene is now the chambers of the Governor in the capital at Albany. Its occupant is *Winfield Barnes*, the young village lawyer to whom *Mary* gave the cup of water at the gate of the Catskill farm twenty-one years ago. He has risen to the highest executive office in his state and has been named by his party as its next candidate for the Presidency.

Meanwhile *Mary's* work among her unfortunate sisters in the sweatshops and factories has been crowned with success. From a working woman she has become a labor organizer and as the head of a national woman's union has forced through the legislature a bill defining an eight-hour working day for women and children which needs only the Governor's signature to become a law.

Her efforts in behalf of the measure have won the Governor's admiration, and when they meet alone in the executive chamber for the signing of the bill, he declares his love and asks her to become his wife. *Mary* gladly accepts but insists that he must first know every circumstance of her life. Unemotionally and in detail she confesses her relations with *Alan Wilson*, who has now long been dead, and offers *Barnes* the opportunity to withdraw his marriage proposal. His answer is to grasp her in his embrace.

Then comes *John Maddock*, the shrewd, unscrupulous man

of affairs who champions the cause of the working classes in his sensational newspapers while, as the head of a powerful trust, he keeps his underpaid employees in a state of slavery. *Maddock* has bitterly opposed the labor bill and threatens that, if it becomes a law, he will use his newspaper influence to bring about *Barnes'* political ruin. His warning having proved



Photograph by White, New York.

Arthur Shaw as the nonchalant *Property Man*, in "The Yellow Jacket."

unavailing, he is about to go, when *Mary Page* emerges from the Governor's inner room. The glimpse of her brings a faint remembrance of that day long ago in *Alan Wilson's* apartment, and places in his hands a new and more dangerous weapon against his enemy.

The fourth stage of *Mary's* pilgrimage

house, for victory seems to be already within their grasp.

Then, without warning, comes *Maddock's* revenge. He has obtained positive proof of *Mary's* identity and stands ready to publish broadcast the scandal of her past unless *Barnes* will agree in his final speech to repudiate the labor



Photograph by White, New York.

Juliette Day as *Mah Fah Loy*; Fanny Addison Pitt as *See Not* and—

now arrives. In the intervening two years she has become *Winfield Barnes'* wife. It is the eve of the Presidential election and the hour when her husband is to make the final great speech of the campaign. Both are supremely happy as they sit in the library of their New York

relief plank in his party's platform. The national committeemen get wind of the crisis and hasten to confer with the candidate. Unless *Maddock's* charges can be refuted immediately the election will be lost.

Barnes listens to his advisers' disclosures unmoved. The story is preposter-

ous, he insists, and meets each detail with a flat denial. But no sooner has he reassured the anxious committeemen than *Maddock* boldly presents himself at the house and demands an interview. So persuasively does he set forth the facts in his possession that it becomes imperative that *Mrs.*



George Ralph as *Wu Hoo Git*, in "The Yellow Jacket."

Barnes shall confront him. In spite of her husband's bitter protest she is summoned to appear.

Then follows the episode of the woman's mental torture toward which the preceding details of the story have led. *Mary* meets her inquisitor calmly. She submits to his cross-examination. Wary and self-possessed, she evades his questions for a time. But soon she contradicts herself. As a last refuge she resorts to falsehoods, protesting that, during the time to which her tormentor refers, she was a teacher in an up-state village school. *Maddock* refuses to accept her explanation. If all she says is true, he replies, the township records will substantiate her statements. Fairly trapped, her resolution falters, her racked nerves give way, and she makes the abject admission that all of *Maddock's* charges against her are true.

This powerfully emotional scene with its deeply sympathetic appeal instantly

recalls the ordeal at the climax of "Mrs. Dane's Defense" and *Wanda Kelly's* suffering in the more recent play of "The Woman." But *Mrs. Fiske's* nervous intensity and repressed emotionalism galvanize it into new life. In no other play has she given a more moving exhibition of a woman tortured beyond the limit of physical and mental endurance.

And with this specter of a past transgression menacing him in his hour of victory, *Winfield Barnes* goes dejectedly to make his final address before his constituents. Defeat

is nothing to him compared to his wife's public disgrace, yet he is resolved not to betray his party's trust by agreeing to *Maddock's* contemptible compromise.

Mary, left alone, finds a way to meet the crisis. She summons *Maddock* back to the house and boldly declares that if he publishes his story, she too will print hers, exposing his motive in spreading the scandal and asking the public to judge between him and herself. Then, when *Maddock* has made statements that reflect disastrously upon himself, the woman makes known to him that he is trapped, for their entire conversation has been recorded by a dictograph. So there is nothing left for the scoundrel but to admit defeat, and *Barnes* returns home to domestic security and happiness.

It needs a virtuoso in the acting art to embody successfully a character throughout widely separated stages of a career covering nearly a quarter of a century. Mrs. Fiske as *Mary Page* meets these requirements of "The High Road" in a way that discloses how varied is her technical equipment. A younger actress might create a more faithful illusion in the early scenes of the play but it needs her experienced ability to emphasize the traits of *Mary's* nature and trace the development of her character through the later episodes of the story. Only an actress of her nervous energy and eloquent emotionalism could successfully meet the demands of the scene at the climax, when *Mary* jeopardizes her husband's career before the cross-questioning of *Maddock*.

There is no other woman in the cast to dispute the star's prestige but each of the essential male characters is vividly limned and well played. Perhaps the most effective of these is the polished but unprincipled *Maddock*, in which Arthur Byron is seen to excellent advantage, although *Winfield Barnes* by Frederick Perry and *Alan Wilson* by Charles Waldron leave very little to be desired.

A RECORD of the New York stage's important midwinter events would be sadly incomplete if it left out of account "The Yellow Jacket," the one production of the year that has seasoned the theatre with the paprika of absolute novelty. However, it depends for its lively and unique interest so much upon the naïve, primitive manner in which it is presented and so little upon its score of exotic characters and the Oriental legend in which they are concerned that it thwarts detailed description at every turn. No chronicle of its performance could be complete without the aid of moving picture illustrations.

A Chinese play, presented in the Chinese manner, but spoken in English, is the way it is classified by George C. Hazelton and J. Harry Benrimo, who concocted it by dovetailing together at least three originals culled from ancient Chinese literature. Then, to give it a characteristic touch, it is acted on a stage barren of scenery but not a bit less atmospheric or interesting on that account.

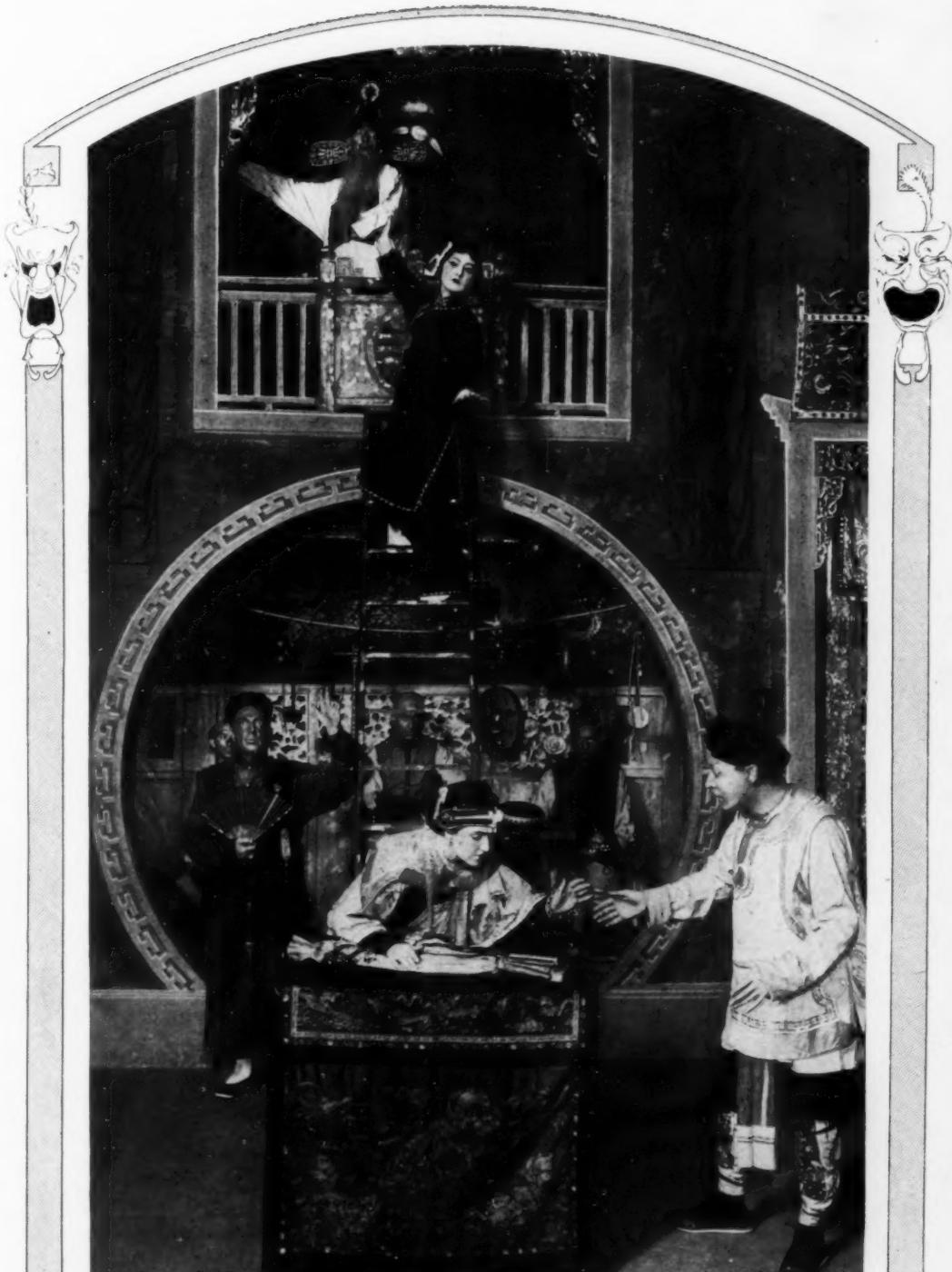
A Chinese orchestra in an alcove at the rear emits strange, unmusical squeaks as the performance proceeds, bored property men and stage hands mingle nonchalantly with the actors, supplying the primitive paraphernalia necessary for the unfolding of the tale, or smoking their cigarettes and sipping their tea when their services are not required. And all these queer proceedings take place in full view of the audience.

When death overtakes one of the characters he climbs with Celestial dignity up a ladder to the balcony which is supposed to represent Heaven. When the hero contemplates suicide by hanging, the property man is ready to oblige with a noose attached to a bamboo pole, which he dangles over the actor's head. To move from one room of a mandarin's palace to another is merely to take different positions on the stage. And to go floating down a river in a boat is only to recline on a bench while a slave at the back swings an oar to and fro, a musician imitating the swish of the waves by scraping together two sandpaper-covered boards. But most amusing is the man to whom is entrusted the care of the costumes and who solemnly dusts each actor as he emerges into the scene.

All this may seem ridiculous in cold type, but "The Yellow Jacket," with its rich and picturesque costuming, though it is grotesque, is anything but a ridiculous play. And even the most trivial scenes are more redolent of native Chinese atmosphere than the whole of that other current Chinese drama, "The Daughter Of Heaven." There is never a moment when the air is not heavy with romance, intrigue and tragedy, and whether the episodes be of love-making or bloodshed they are acted with the most profound solemnity, although the more exciting they become, the greater grows the boredom of the property men.

A Chorus or announcer explains each scene before the curtain is drawn. Having accomplished this important function he takes his seat at a table to become the prompter. Then the property man arranges the furniture, dusts off the actors, relights his cigarette and motions for the performance to begin.

Three scenes, "The Mother's Parting," "The Story Of Love," and "The Con-



Photograph by White, New York.

The end of Act I in "The Yellow Jacket." Saxone Morland, as *Chee Moo*, ascends to Heaven via an ordinary ladder. Mark Price, as the *Ghost*, receives her, while *Lee Sim* and his wife, *Suey Sin Fah*, find the baby prince (represented by a block of wood).

flict," contain the ramifications of the plot. It tells how *Wu Sin, the Great*, whose first wife, *Chee Moo*, has borne him a son apparently bewitched, conspires to have her murdered in order to please *Due Jung Fah*, his second wife, all of which is intensely satisfactory to *Tai Fah Min (Great Painted Face)* who is the fair *Due Jung Fah's* ambitious father. *Lee Sin*, a farmer, is appointed to do the deed, but it happens that *Lee Sin's* wife loves *Chee Moo*, so he kills, instead, her treacherous maid, *Tso*, and spirits away the condemned mother to safety, adopting her supposedly bewitched child and rearing him to manhood.

tained a fierce and hideous hunchback to strike terror to his enemies. The leering, misshapen monster does not frighten the valiant *Wu Hoo Git*, who wields his two-edged sword unweariedly until the last of his enemies has climbed the ladder to Heaven.

The great care with which "The Yellow Jacket" is staged and the even skill with which its thirty characters are performed are largely responsible for the success which the play, after a doubtful beginning, has attained. Though there are



Photograph by White, New York.

The train wreck scene in "The Whip," the Drury Lane spectacle, which

Eventually this son, *Wu Hoo Git*, grows up, and the remainder of the story reveals how he returns to claim his honorable ancestors and assert his family rights. But before he succeeds in recovering his ancestral yellow jacket he finds it necessary to vanquish *Wu Fah Din*, his weak, effete half-brother, who has re-

plenty of well known actors in the rôles, I shall mention only one. He is Arthur Shaw, who impersonates the property man. If the fact that he has not a line to speak makes Mr. Shaw's work seem easy, it should be remembered that during the performance he must respond to more than three hundred "cues."

NEARLY half a dozen years have passed since one of the big spectacular melodramas, such as the Drury Lane Theatre in London annually presents, has found its way over to this country. But if anyone harbors the deluded notion that such brobdingnagian productions, with their exciting mechanical scenes and primitive plots, in which downtrodden virtue rises in its might in the end to grind black-hearted villainy in the dust, have outlived their interest even with audiences ordinarily attracted

impossible as to explain the details of the realistic scenic effects which follow in quick succession through its five acts. But only an inkling of its plot is necessary to convey an idea of the huge scale on which it is conceived.

Like all true British melodramas, "The Whip" is a story of racing glory. Its title refers to the sleek mare that is to carry the colors of the venerable *Marquis of Beverly* in the great Two Thousand Guinea Stakes. Upon the mare's success depends the happiness of *Lady Diana Sartoris*, the granddaughter of the *Marquis*, whom accident has thrown in contact with the disowned and misjudged



has demonstrated that New Yorkers still love the old-style melodrama.

by more delicate forms of the drama, he has only to observe the vast popularity of "The Whip" to understand how mistaken he has been.

To describe the complications of this intricate concoction by Mr. Cecil Raleigh and Mr. Henry Hamilton would be as

Earl of Brancaster—who naturally is hated by the villainous *Captain Sartoris*, *Diana's* cousin, for he too is ambitious to marry her.

The *Earl of Brancaster* has received a tip that the *Whip* will win the race. To retrieve his dissipated fortunes and

make himself worthy to offer his heart and hand to *Lady Diana*, he backs the mare heavily and thus tempts the villainous *Captain* to bring about her defeat by fair means or foul.

The plan which *Captain Sartoris* adopts is to wreck the train on which the *Whip* will be shipped to the Newmarket Race Course. If all goes well it will be an easy job. *Captain Sartoris* needs only to creep along the running board of the train, uncouple the *Whip*'s car, and leave it to collide in a tunnel with an express train that is following at lightning speed.

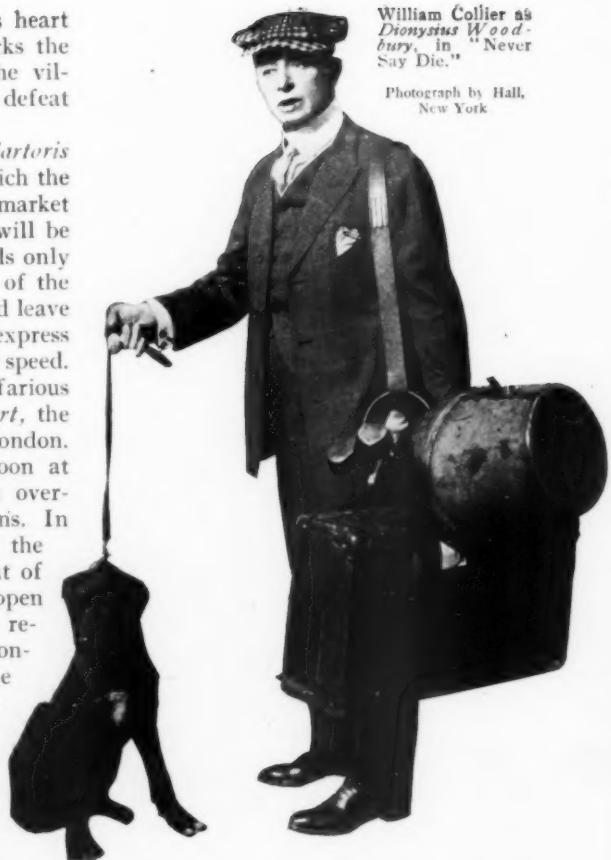
But on the very day that the nefarious scheme is concocted *Tom Lambert*, the *Whip*'s trainer, has come up to London. While putting in a quiet afternoon at Mme. Tussard's Wax Works he overhears the plotting of the villains. In order to learn the full details of the conspiracy he adopts the expedient of posing as an effigy of Doctor Crippen in the Chamber of Horrors. He remains too long and finds to his consternation that he is locked in the museum for the night. But he succeeds, nevertheless, in calling the manor house of the *Marquis* on the telephone and warns *Mrs. Beamish* of the mare's peril in time. In her high-power automobile *Mrs. Beamish* rushes away to the rescue; and then comes the hair-raising scene which is the sensational climax of the piece.

No true lover of melodrama will accept even so tragic a happening as a railroad wreck on faith. To be believed it must be pictured in all its gruesome details before the audience. So next you see the *Whip*, on which the fortunes of the hero and heroine depend, being loaded aboard her car. Then comes the exciting rush of the train, with journals smoking, with sparks flying from the rails, landscape whizzing by, and the dastardly *Captain Sartoris* crouched upon the running board, stealthily uncoupling the mare's car. The train disappears; the detached car comes to a stop at the tunnel's mouth; and then, with a honk! honk! of victory, up dashes *Mrs. Beamish* in her automobile to the rescue.

She is just in the nick of time. The doors of the car are pried open; the *Whip* is led forth to safety, when—crash! the

William Collier as
Dionysius Woodbury, in "Never
Say Die."

Photograph by Hall,
New York



express dashes out of the tunnel and the collision smashes engine and train to splinters, filling the stage proscenium-high with flying débris. As an example of what theatrical ingenuity can accomplish in the way of blood-curdling realism, this train wreck scene in "The *Whip*" has never before been so much as approached.

Compared with it a previous scene, in which a runaway automobile dashes down hill, hurls itself against a post and is overturned, becomes only a trifle. The *Marquis of Beverly*'s stable, with its dozen hunters and its pack of hounds, dwindles to insignificance. And even the race scene at the end, with its careening horses and cheering, excited masses of people, is only an ordinary affair.

Need it be said that the *Whip* wins the race exactly as the villainous *Captain Sartoris* feared? Or that the virtuous *Earl of Brancaster* is restored to favor and his estates? Or that the fair *Lady*

Diana, who by means of a forged marriage certificate has been misrepresented to the world as *Captain Sartoris*' wife, is freed from her nemesis and permitted to wed the man she loves? Or that the innocent sister of the jockey, who has been betrayed by *Captain Sartoris*, obtains her revenge? Or that *Mrs. Beamish*, whose perilous automobile ride brings about the Whip's rescue, rewards the mare's trainer with her hand and heart? Or that, last of all, *Captain Sartoris*, ruined and disgraced, is made to bite the dust? All these salutary *dénouements* are brought about in good time and in the good old way.

The acting of "The Whip" is uncommonly good for a melodrama of its rough texture and popular quality. Every established tradition is observed by the players, with the result that Evelyn Keny reveals *Lady Diana* as a paragon of feminine goodness and gentleness, John Halliday represents the *Earl of Bраницaster* as a model of manly virtues, and Charles Blackall portrays *Captain Sartoris* as the most contemptible of miscreants, for which he nightly receives the enthusiastic tribute of storms of hisses. The most striking of the characters, however, is *Mrs. Beamish*, whom Marie Illington impersonates with intermingled seriousness and humor. There is a high-born villainess, of course, to aid *Captain Sartoris* in his machinations, and this haughty lady is darksome typified by Leonora Harris. Nor are these all! There must be nearly fifty more speaking characters in the play, besides fully one hundred others who compose the throng in the racing scene.

THERE may not be as many Colliers as usual in the new farce, "Never Say Die," to which William, the head of the family, his wife Paula Marr, and William Jr., the youthful hope of the future farcical stage, are now devoting their attention, but even with Helena Collier-Garrick and divers other relatives out of the cast, the piece which the comedian has written for himself in collaboration with W. H. Post is quite as amusing as any of his laugh producers which have preceded it since the days of "The Man From Mexico."

The general formula of the Collier

dramaturgy must be pretty well understood by this time. William is nothing if not generous with his collaborators, whoever they may be. To the latter invariably fall the responsibility of fashioning the general plan of the play. The actor reserves the privilege of inserting into it the character which best suits his fancy. The character itself may be relevant or not—audiences addicted to the peculiar Collier recipe of humor pay little heed to such considerations as long as the actor is given sufficient opportunity to disport himself.

In "Never Say Die" Mr. Collier is a little less detached than usual from the general proceedings. His character is *Dionysius Woodbury*—note the "die" in *Dionysius* and the "bury" in *Woodbury* and you cannot fail to grasp their application to the title.

Dionysius, a rich young man, has everything to live for, but he is obsessed with a fear that he is not long for this world. Furthermore, two eminent medical specialists have so far confirmed his belief that, having put him on a diet which excludes black cigars, wine, cocktails and the other necessities of life, they announce that he has not more than one month to live at the most.

With one foot in the grave and no one to whom to bequeath his money, the thoughts of *Dionysius* turn benevolently to his fellow men. If he must die, he will solace his remaining hours on earth by making others happy.

The opportunity comes when *Dionysius* observes the predicament of his friend *Hector Walters*, an artist scantly endowed with this world's goods. *Walters* wants to marry *Violet Stevenson*, but poverty bars the way to matrimony. *Dionysius* proposes a way out of their dilemma. Since he has only a month to live, why not marry *Violet* himself? She will inherit his fortune and when he is gone she will be free to take for her husband the young man of her heart.

The bargain is struck and the marriage takes place. Forthwith *Dionysius* sets out upon a round of dissipation to hasten his approaching dissolution. But his philanthropic plan is fated to miscarry. The cocktails which the learned specialists have banned become an elixir of life. The cigarettes he has been told to shun im-

part to him new energy. *Dionysius* discovers too late that he is destined to live.

With this dilemma as a starting point, "Never Say Die" develops along the broadly humorous lines familiar in every Collier farce. To release the wife who is his friend's sweetheart, he makes elaborate plans to get himself compromised and pave the way for a divorce. But even this sacrifice is not vouchsafed to *Dionysius*. At the dinner he has arranged for *La Cigale* of the chorus, *Violet* and her

It is needless to add that Mr. Collier carries the burden of "Never Say Die" on his own shoulders. His style is always the same, but it never lacks the appearance of freshness and spontaneity. His comic dejection at his approaching death, his sudden rebound to happiness when he discovers his physicians' error, and his amusing effrontery and quick retort when it dawns upon him that he too has something to live for, fill the admirers of his humorous personality with delight.



Photograph by White, New York.

David Montgomery, Elsie Janis and Fred Stone in "The Lady of the Slipper."

mother drop in unexpectedly and through the blundering of the detective he has retained to surprise him, the wife is mistaken as the intended co-respondent.

In the end *Hector Walters*, whom *Dionysius* has been striving to aid, proves himself entirely unworthy of such a charming girl as *Violet*. Meanwhile *Dionysius*, fully restored to health, discovers that he has fallen madly in love with her. So future happiness awaits them both as the final curtain falls.

In one amusing scene William steps aside to give William, Jr., an opportunity to prove that he is a true chip off the Collier block. The child comes to *Dionysius'* apartment to interest him in his dog *Hermann*, which, according to parental orders, must be given away. After *Dionysius* has consented to take *Hermann* off his little friend's hands, he wonders where the dog can be put in so small an apartment.

"Oh, you can't put him anywhere,"

said *Buster*. "You have to stay with him."

And then, in his effort to give *Hermann* a good character, he adds:

"He's a good dog. Why, he don't even bite dogs. I taught him not to, and some of the big dogs helped me to teach him!"

With Mr. Collier in the center of the stage most of the time and with nearly all the witty lines to speak, "Never Say Die" does not offer many opportunities for the other members of the company to distinguish themselves. However, Paula

HOW severe has become the competition among the producers of the musical plays is shown by the collection of talent thought necessary for "The Lady of the Slipper." How well, too, such prodigal investment in stars is nowadays rewarded is being proved by the popularity which Anne Caldwell and Lawrence McCarthy's modern arrangement of the old nursery tale of "Cinderella," set to melodies by Victor Herbert, has attained before audiences, in spite of



Photograph by White, New York.

Another view of Montgomery and Stone, with Elsie Janis as *Cinderella*, in "The Lady of the Slipper."

Marr (Mrs. Collier) is charming and dainty as *Violet*, and John Clulow and Charles Dow Smith, as the two eminent but mistaken physicians, become good targets for the star's glib wit. Grant Stewart is amusing in the rôle of a comic butler and Nicholas Judels performs capitally the part of an excitable chef. If others in the company seem somewhat vague, it must be remembered that "Never Say Die" makes no pretensions beyond a one-part farce.

the surfeit of nearly every conceivable kind of light musical entertainment.

In "The Lady of the Slipper," which is something midway between pantomime and burlesque, and adorned more elaborately than either, Elsie Janis is the neglected little *Cinderella* who is left sitting disconsolately beside the ashes with only her cat *Mauser* for a companion while her selfish step-sisters go gaily to the *Crown Prince Maximilian's* glittering ball. The good *Fairy God-*



mother who suddenly transforms her into a beautiful princess also conjures forth Fred Stone as the *Scarecrow* of the old "Wizard Of Oz" days and David Montgomery, not as the *Tin Woodman*, but as an animated and jolly pumpkin, and henceforth they become *Cinderella's* loyal comrades throughout her trials and triumphs.

The most fanciful scene in the production comes when *Cinderella*, in her glass coach, drawn by six plunging white ponies, and with Mr. Stone and Mr. Montgomery as coachman and footman on the box, is seen whisking in the moonlight past farmhouses and villages on her way to the ball at which her beauty is to confound her step-sisters and captivate the *Prince*. In this ingenious scene the producers employ again, but with added pictorial effect, the old mechanical device long ago made famous in "Ben Hur."

The ball, of course, is the glittering spectacle of the fantasy. And here, among the gaily costumed guests, is introduced the fourth of the quartet of stars—Lydia Lopoukowa, the Russian dancer, who exhibits her fluffball grace in the airy "Youth" ballet which follows a fantastic "Witches dance." As the clock strikes midnight and the spell is ended *Cinderella* flees and loses her

slipper. It falls into the *Prince's* hands and he follows her back to the kitchen in the castle of *Baron Nix*, where all ends happily as an extravaganza made from the good old fairy tale should.

In the score Mr. Herbert has not woven melodies that compare with the best in his "Babes In Toyland," but nevertheless he has been happy in catching the spirit of the fantasy. It is curious to note how little of the humor depends on the libretto. The fun throughout proceeds from the comic personalities of the stars and their grotesque fooling. Although Miss Janis does little in the way of singing, she is a splendid dancing companion for Montgomery and Stone.

All the songs—they number twenty or more—have a lively swing, from "Meow! Meow! Meow!" which Miss Janis chants to her faithful cat, to "The Princess Of Far Away," in which she is accompanied by the *Prince* and his courtiers. There are also some broadly humorous ditties by Montgomery and Stone, as, for instance, when they sing "Them Was The Childhood Days" and "Bagdad." One of the rousing ensembles, entitled "The Drums Of Nations," represents the drums of the Crown Prince, Leipsic, Napoleon, Great Britain, North America, Young America and Dixie.



Photograph by White, New York.

Some of the chorus in "The Lady of the Slipper."



I G - A - L O O !

He tears 'em limb
from limb!!

by HOPKINS MOORHOUSE

Co-Author of "Lollapalooza."

WITH complete dissatisfaction Mr. Arbuthnot Shoebottom eyed the gnawed bones that littered the little square of sawdust in which he squatted. There were also a sprinkling of peanut shells, a few peach-stones and a banana-skin which a small boy had insisted on dropping into the cage. Mr. Shoebottom's eyes smoldered as he looked upon the long toe-nails of his two bare feet, upon his brown hairy shanks, upon the girdle of leopard-skin and the black matted hair of his chest and arms. In the little hand mirror, hanging directly in front of him, he could get a glimpse of a great shock of long, coarse black hair that cascaded about his head, of two eyes gleaming through it, of a big brown nose protruding and a wide mouth that just now was shut grimly.

Mouth, nose, eyes—these were genuine Shoebottom property, and the black, matted hair grew amid the pores of Mr.

ILLUSTRATED
BY
HERB ROTH

Shoebottom's skin and was accordingly genuine; the shanks—and the hair upon them—were likewise genuine, Mr. Shoebottom having used them for walking purposes ever since he was fourteen months old. But the great shock of long, coarse, black hair had once switched flies from the flanks of an old nag; and the brown tint of all the human cuticle in sight had come out of a can of walnut stain!

For the small sum of ten cents, one dime, you could have mounted the plank platform, walked over to the square wooden box arrangement covered with red bunting, and through the meshes of the wire cage that projected above it you could have convinced yourself that Mr. Arbuthnot Shoebottom was from the jungles of the Philippines and was wild! Only you wouldn't have known that his name was Shoebottom, nor would you actually have seen him "eat 'em alive!"

But it was not the knowledge that he

was a humbug which bothered Mr. Shoebottom. Nor was his discontent born of the fear that his salary would not be forthcoming; "Old Boy Week" in Tilsburg was proving quite a windfall for most of the show people who had transferred their tents and paraphernalia at the close of the neighboring county fair. No. But it was the first time necessity had driven Mr. Shoebottom to link up with "a bunch of pikers!"

Just that—"pikers:" the whole caboodle, from the animal circus gang right down to "Papita, Queen of the Gypsies," who told fortunes and financed all the fake gambling games on the grounds. The way things were conducted jarred upon Mr. Shoebottom's delicate sense of the artistic; the crowd wasn't given a run for its money. As for Nelles, his own boss—he had as much business brains as a beetle; and there were fresh scratches on Mr. Shoebottom's bare shoulder where Nelles had *really* punched him with the steel prongs fixed to the stock of the whip!

The way the "Buried Alive!" show quit had put the finishing touch to Mr. Shoebottom's contempt for his present associates. Instead of really getting busy, Williams, the "barker," had contented himself with trying to sell tickets by pointing to the banner that topped the tent, with the result that the public didn't seem to care whether the "Professor" stayed buried under six feet of earth without food or drink till Judgment Day. When Mr. Shoebottom thought of



Gathering his hairy brown legs beneath him, Ig-a-loo suddenly sprang out into the glare of the afternoon sun. With a blood-curdling yell, he brandished his terrible club around his head, and sped like the wind.

the possibilities if that show had been handled properly! Decidedly this atmosphere of dimes and soiled collars was no place for him!

Mr. Shoebottom might have kept right on till he had developed a bad case of the reveries, if Nelles hadn't mounted the "ballyhoo" out front and begun to beat a brass gong. It was time for the first "spiel" of the afternoon, and wandering sight-seers were beginning to thicken to some semblance of a crowd. Mr. Shoebottom tossed away the end of his cigarette and listened to Nelles clumsily launching into his harangue.

"If this wi-uld and savage crea-chure ever escaped," concluded the showman, "there would be no hope—no-o hope for any poor mortal who crossed his path!"

Ig-a-loo, the Wild Man of the Jungles, would tear 'em *limb from limb*, just as rep-re-sented in the picture before you!"

With his whip Nelles slapped the canvas spread, lurid with paint. It was the signal for Mr. Shoebottom to leap to the top of the cage, cling to the heavy wire meshes and shake the structure till it rocked.

"Down, sir! *Down!*" thundered Nelles, drawing his revolver and running over to the cage with raised whip.

A sharp prod with the prongs on the stock of the whip warned Mr. Shoebottom that he was clinging longer than usual. He dropped back out of sight with a snarl. He had been staring at a girl in a red tam-o'-shanter who stood in the front row, holding timidly to the arm of a well set-up young man. The latter was looking at her with a questioning grin.

"Gee, she's a peach!" muttered Mr. Shoebottom.

"Step right up, ladies and gentlemen. Only a dime. Better take off that red hat, lady," Nelles cautioned. "He's awfully fond o' bright colors—might try to snatch it, y' understand."

The two stool-pigeons, who were paid \$1.25 per day for leading the "rush" for tickets at the end of each "spiel," were already at the cage, pointing into it with delight and wonder. When the girl peeped cautiously over the edge, clutching the lapel of her escort's coat, Mr. Shoebottom was grimacing into the little mirror and twisting it about in his hands.

"Some class all right!" murmured Mr. Shoebottom under his breath. "A queen for fair! Clean, strong guy she's with, too; looks like an easy mark, but Lord help the markers if he found out!" He caught sight of the gold band on the third finger of her left hand.

"Married!" grunted Mr. Shoebottom to himself. He threw the little mirror into the sawdust and, grabbing the chain with which he was fastened, pulled at it till the great muscles on his shoulders bulged to thrilling proportions.

"Oh Joe, look—the poor thing! I just think it's a shame to abuse a poor wild creature like that! Look at those scratches!" Her cheeks flushed with excitement. "The man said he liked bright

colors and I'm going to give him my tam."

She stuffed it through the cage as she spoke and the "poor thing" reached for it with a gibber of delight. He caught a glimpse of her eyes, swimming with tears of pity, before her husband pulled her hastily away.

"Gee, she's a peach!" muttered Mr. Shoebottom wistfully.

And then right on top of that, there was a shuffle of feet and three faces grinned down into the cage. One belonged to Nelles; one to Williams, erstwhile "barker" for the defunct "Buried Alive!" show; one to "Professor" Smith himself. The three faces were promptly withdrawn.

"What d'yuh know 'bout that!" gasped Nelles.

"Quick!" growled Williams. "Pipe the gink's phiz so yuh'll know 'm. That's the yap we got a string on. Fi' thousand cold an' you're in on it, Nel. See yuh later an' put yuh wise. Some pickin's, believe muh!"

Mr. Shoebottom listened, his jaw sagging. He leaped to the top of the cage and shook it wrathfully. He saw the girl and the big young man wending their way towards the animal circus. Williams and the "Professor" were descending the steps out front and Nelles was beginning his "spiel" once more.

II

Tilsonburg usually put out the cat and crawled between the covers not later than ten o'clock. After that hour it did not take the show-grounds long to become deserted; by midnight the flaring gasoline torches had gone out, tent-flaps were dropped and guy-ropes tightened, only the litter of paper bags remaining as souvenirs of the departed crowd. Here and there dull dots of lantern light glowed through the canvas of the smaller living tents at the rear, and presently most of these faded out. Only a heavy-eyed watchman or two prowled about half-heartedly, frequently yawning.

The hour was propitious for little games of poker—and the hatching of mischief. There were no playing-cards or chips spread on top of the pine box

around which the three men sat in "Professor" Smith's tent; the space was occupied by a couple of whisky bottles, a siphon of soda, glasses and a box of twenty-five cent cigars.

Even so. For it must be said that when the eminent Tilsonburg barrister, Mr. J. Cronyn Fennel, city father and petty grafter, set out to do a thing, he did it with a fine appreciation of the psychological importance of frills. The grandest residence in the "South End," the fattest bank account, the strongest political pull—these are things compatible with twenty-five-cent cigars; besides, Mr. Fennel had long ago discovered that cat's-paws work better when well buttered.

The chestnuts the eminent gentleman was after just now belonged rightfully to Joseph Crawford, the young farmer from the neighboring county, whose mother owned a very desirable factory site in Tilsonburg—a piece of property against which Fennel held a mortgage for five thousand dollars, due within a week. And as J. Cronyn Fennel had drummed up a chance to sell the property for a good round sum to the Dolliver-Grant Manufacturing Company, of Boston, it was unfortunate that Joseph Crawford had been carefully saving up his money to lift the mortgage as a present to his mother when it fell due on her birthday.

Fennel had been too much surprised at this unexpected news to think clearly, until with equal unexpectedness he had run across an old political henchman in the trustworthy person of "Bat" Smith. Under the stimulation of this meeting it was easy to see that if Joseph Crawford were parted from his five thousand dollars, there would be nothing to prevent the foreclosure of the mortgage and the consummation of the deal with the Boston people.

Supposing that Mr. Smith and a couple of trusting friends had an option on some vacant property that Fennel owned; that Mr. Smith had a nephew who was private secretary to Mr. Dolliver, of Boston, and had received inside information that the Dolliver-Grant Company was going to locate its factory on the aforesaid Fennel property—supposing these things, would it not be plausible to form

a little syndicate to buy the Fennel property and hold up the factory people for a stiff sum? Wouldn't it be a splendid opportunity for a local man with some ready money to make a quick turn-over? It was easy to see that such a "frame-up" would divert suspicion from J. Cronyn Fennel.

"The slick part of the thing," enthused Williams, who undertook to explain the deal to Nelles, "is that Punkin-Seed hands over his fi' thousand to a gazabo he's acquainted with down in Fennel's office. He puts up the coin in—in his crow, an'—"

"In his wha—at?"

"*In escrow*," scowled Professor Bat Smith, helping himself to another drink.

"I knowed it was somethin' like that. It's law lingo, Nel, meanin' sort o' stakeholder, y'understand."

"I'm having some cards printed for you, Nelles," nodded the Professor. "You'll meet Crawford Monday night; you'll be introduced as manager of the Boston firm. All you got to do is to say you've decided to buy from us and are ready to hand over a check to our syndicate on the spot. That releases Crawford's coin an'—we flit."

"We're goin' after this here sucker *right*," added Williams. "He was doin' the whole works here to-day. Him an' his girl had their fortunes told over in Papita's tent, an' yuh know 'bout how ready these yaps is to believe in that kind o' thing. Papita told 'em they was due to run up against a bunch o' luck within twenty-four hours—said it looked like a real-estate deal to her. She advised 'em strong. I promised Papita a hundred if she done it right."

"Crawford is hangin' out with the old woman at 356 Oxford Street," supplemented the Professor with the air of a man who prides himself on detail. "We got properly introduced an' laid our lines this afternoon. He's keen for it an' his money'll be posted in the morning." He yawned.

Very cautiously Mr. Arbuthnot Shoebottom backed out beneath the bottom of the tent. The disused coffin-box, in which the Professor had been buried alive for such a short and unprofitable time, was between Mr. Shoebottom and

the group near the tent-pole; it had afforded splendid concealment while he listened to the conference, and now it completely protected his noiseless retreat.

For, although he was more or less of a humbug, Mr. Shoebottom didn't belong among "pikers" like these. He knew his duty. Anyway, she was a "peach." But his plans for stopping the villainy that was afoot were completely upset next day. He was in his cage, waiting for the opening of the afternoon session, when Nelle-

mounted the staging, accompanied by McNulty, one of the animal circus men. With sudden misgiving Mr. Shoebottom noted that Nelles wore a brand new suit of clothes, of a style which might readily have been worn by the manager of a concern like the D o l l i v e r - Grant Manufacturing Company, of Boston.

"Goin' to look over the town with some friends, this af', Shoebottom," he announced as the pair reached the cage. "Mac here will be ready to do the spiel in a few minutes an'

you help him all you can. Here's your salary to date an' there's an extra V in it fer yuh if yuh do real good this P. M. Looks like pickin's to-day."

Mr. Shoebottom merely nodded as he stowed his salary inside the tight-fitting trunks beneath the leopard-skin girdle.

"Seems there was a reporter took my spiel down in shorthand yesterday," grinned Nelles amiably. "Son-of-a-gun made quite a yarn of it—'bout you bein' some dangerous if yuh ever got loose an'

so on. Good business, eh? You're doin' well, Ig. Eat 'em up! Horrify 'em! S'long."

Nelles and McNulty had no sooner withdrawn than Mr. Shoebottom began to do some rapid thinking. He had been figuring he had until Monday to perfect his plans, which as yet were only half formed. Apparently the three conspirators had found the plum so ripe they had decided to pluck it and partake of the fruit without waiting over the week-end and running unnecessary chances.

C a u t i o u s l y "Ig-a-loo, t h e Wild Man of the Jungles," raised himself till he could glance over the grounds. A big blue automobile was standing at the far end of the Midway and Nelles was walking towards it briskly. There was no mistaking the two waiting occupants; t h e "Professor" was in the driver's seat and Williams was lounging in the tonneau, smoking a cigar and laughing. There was an insolent c o c k - sureness in the fellow's attitude that made Mr. Shoebottom grit his teeth.

He dropped back onto his feet, his mind made up. Unless something were done at once to prevent the appointment with Crawford, the deal would be consummated and the young farmer would not wake up till Monday to the fact that he had been buncoed. By that time the precious trio would be far away. There was no time to send a messenger with a note to Crawford, even a trustworthy messenger. Mr. Shoebottom had a plan that promised better than that.

THE TOWN IS YOURS



He took the middle of the road, running free.

He chuckled at the daring of it as he reached quickly in behind the loose board at the bottom of his cage and grabbed up two articles. The red tam-o'-shanter he thrust inside his girdle for a mascot; an unopened can from his supply of walnut-stain followed suit.

Seizing the huge combination of bludgeon and tomahawk, supposed to be his native weapon in the days when he ran wild in the jungles, Mr. Shoebottom pulled away a second loose board and slipped through the opening. He crawled quickly along under the plank platform till he could peer out over the grounds in hasty survey.

Then, gathering his hairy brown legs beneath him and drawing in a big breath, he suddenly sprang out into the glare of the afternoon sun.

With a blood-curdling yell he brandished his terrible club around his head and sped like the wind, heading as the crow flies, straight across the lot.

III

Dinner was over, the dishes washed and Tilsonburg, in white dresses and ribbons, crash hats and post-prandial cigars, was just sallying forth for another afternoon of it. Quite a crowd had already gathered in the neighborhood of the "Tented City." The newspaper review of the "goings-on" had caught the Old Boy carnival spirit with clever fidelity; the half-serious description of Ig-a-loo, the ferocious wild man from the jungles of the Philippines, was the star passage. If you were an initiated skeptic you got one long hearty laugh out of it; if you were uninitiated you got a genuine thrill. Ordinarily Tilsonburg led the simple and peaceful life not conducive to initiation in such matters. Result: new fascination in the lurid canvas depicting Ig-a-loo tearing 'em "limb from limb."

Horrify 'em? It was an important part of Mr. Shoebottom's plan so to do. The group in front of the Wild Man show

saw him first. Fat women, thin women, contraltos, sopranos and mezzos joined in one piercing shriek of terror that froze every bit of animation on the grounds except the merry-go-round. Every eye switched to a single focus. Every idle boot stuck in its tracks—except in the vicinity of the Wild Man show. In that particular neighborhood everybody who wasn't lying prone in a dead faint was animating with frantic zeal. At the one fell yell with which Mr. Shoebottom had declared war, three women lay huddled on the grass,



He literally streamed down upon his victim. He was a terrible sight.

while the rest of the enemy fled in all directions.

For as enemies he must regard all mankind for the next little while; nobody knew better than Mr. Shoebottom that his undertaking was studded at every turn with possibilities much more dangerous than the spikes of his war-club. Nevertheless his second yell was not only blood-curdling; it was so aggressive that nobody who heard it could doubt for a moment but that he meant business. That second whoop was meant to reach the farthest ear on the grounds, and with satisfaction Mr. Shoebottom noted from the tail of his eye that the three occupants of the blue automobile

were standing on the seats, craning their necks.

He was cutting across for the opposite side of the grounds in such a manner that there was no danger of the automobile intercepting him. The course lay clear before him. It was as if he were the stern of a great ocean liner, with the prow cleaving passage a long way ahead of him and rolling back two widening waves of humanity in a smother of flying lingerie.

He was dimly aware of accidents—of an old lady taking a bath in a tub of pink lemonade; of a jabbering Italian picking up spilled peanuts like a monkey; of a dressing-tent bowled over, exposing a performer in a state of underwear and profanity. But always Mr. Shoebottom kept an eye on the blue automobile, and as he noted the three men jump out suddenly and start after him at top speed, he unloosened another whoop.

He was nearing the skirts of the showgrounds. A brave man swept his lady-love into the safety zone, and yanking up a tent stake, leaped directly in the path of the on-coming terror. Mr. Shoebottom whirled his war-club, opened his eyes till the whites showed and spurted with a wild yell of joy.

The brave man rocked uncertainly on the craven brink of cowardice—dropped the tent stake—spurned the earth and grandstand plays.

Ig-a-loo swung into Main street with a battle-cry that fairly dripped with gory suggestion. The showground crowd was behind him now. He took to the center of the road, running free. Directly in front of him loomed an arch, built of cedars. Across the top of it stretched a banner, advising: "THE TOWN IS YOURS."

It certainly was. Mr. Shoebottom could see right down the street as far as the post-office. The sidewalks were full of people making for the showgrounds, happy, laughing people, wearing badges and gay ribbons and holding summer parasols over their heads. It was a gala vista, and it was *all* his! For, swiftly as he was traveling, the news that this was *not* some unique kind of game was beating him by wireless. He could see the sudden wave of excitement rolling along

a full block ahead and hear the S. O. S. of it cackling on all sides.

From the face of another cedar arch stared a second legend: "TILSONBURG IS WAKING UP." Mr. Shoebottom went under it at top speed.

And ran straight into a brass band. It was swinging in from a side street. The tune was, "Oh You Beautiful Doll!" In less time than it takes to read about it, the sawdust began to run out of the "Beautiful Doll" and the poor thing passed away in a series of horn wails and clarinet squeaks.

Mr. Shoebottom swerved to one side in an effort to pass, and ran foul of the drum end of the outfit. To make the thing more interesting he swung his war-club and very neatly punctured the bass drum. The blow knocked the drummer over, so that he fell on his stomach and, being buckled to his drum, rolled a physical-culture somersault, his drumstick flying from his hand and diving up the yawning spout of the bass horn. The man with the kettle-drum struck savagely and bruised the atmosphere, receiving in exchange a punch on the nose which landed him in the gutter, boiling over.

On flew Ig-a-loo!

"HOW ARE YOU, OLD BOY?" inquired a third streamer.

"Pretty well, thanks," grinned Mr. Shoebottom.

By this time quite a crowd was in pursuit. But this did not worry the grotesque object of it. He had tried professional long-distance running before the recent events which turned him into a Wild Man of the Jungle, and as yet he had not been smoking enough to affect his wind. He increased his pace. If he could get through the town safely he felt confident of success.

But he wasn't through yet. Directly ahead he suddenly became aware of a string of men in linen dusters and wide-brimmed straw hats of the type *Maud Muller's* father wore during the haying season. They carried a banner and were parading to the grounds. It was a delegation of Tilsonburg Old Boys—the delegation from Chicago, fresh from their train. And they were of the Initiated and full of skepticism regarding "Wild Men."

At once Mr. Shoebottom changed his tactics. He slackened his speed and approached them at the jog-trot of a long-distance runner, waving his hand in greeting; for they had halted, and while they were laughing good-humoredly at his "get-up," there was real danger of them playfully trying to stop him.

"Clear the track, boys," sang out Mr. Shoebottom with a wide grin. "Calithumpian road race, you know. I'm ahead so far. For the love of Mike keep those mutts back, fellows!" He came almost to a standstill as he pointed back at the rabble in the rear. "They're queering this race an' I don't want it protested. Why don't the fools give the other runners a chance!"

It was the right spirit, the sportsman-like spirit, the Chicago spirit! With one accord the whole delegation charged at the crowd. Chuckling, Mr. Shoebottom jogged through their ranks. It was his opportunity. Up a side street he sped as fast as he could go.

"WE'RE PROUD OF YOU!" flapped a fourth banner.

"Not yet, but soon," panted Mr. Shoebottom.

Over a hedge he went, across a lawn, over a back fence into a back lane. A servant girl, balancing a pan of dirty water at the kitchen door, took one horrified look and promptly fell down the steps.

It was Mr. Shoebottom's chance now to shake off pursuit for a breathing space. It was very necessary that he lose himself for a short time. Even as the snake in the grass sheds its skin, so must Ig-a-loo shift the increasing burden of his wildness.

He sprinted out into a back street and noted that off to the left it ended in a common. He swerved towards it. He had reached the outskirts at last and the thing was assuming the simplified form of spelling.

He even stopped for a moment to get his bearings. Not far away a creek wandered around, bragging to water-cress of its ability to cleanse. A well-worn path ran straight across the common, an evident short-cut to town for residents of the South-End. His eye traveled along it like lightning. And like lightning he

dropped into the long grass behind some shrubbery.

For Ig-a-loo was on the hunt!

The man had just turned into the path from a side street. He came along with his head bent, jauntily switching at the grass with his cane. He was dressed in a silk hat and a long-tailed afternoon coat of the latest cut. On one lapel of it was a white flower; on the other fluttered a bright crimson Committee badge. He wore a white vest with pearl buttons; he wore pearl-gray trousers; he carried pearl-gray gloves in his hand.

"My meat!" growled Ig-a-loo hungrily.

He waited till the worthy citizen reached a spot where a thick fringe of shrubbery skirted the path for some distance. It was a desirable spot, a safe spot, too near the center of the common for escape.

Then arose Mr. Shoebottom with a hoarse yell. He literally streamed down upon his victim, coarse black hair flowing backward with the wind of his going. He was a terrible sight.

So was the other fellow! He swung at anchor. His long legs wobbled. He was scared dumb. Completely unhinged with fright, his long thin face turned a dirty, greenish yellow, as when one voyages upon troubled waters. He resembled tooth-paste in a collapsible tube.

His cane shook as he raised it in feeble defence, but one sweep of the terrible war-club sent it skyrocketing. With a thud Mr. Shoebottom's two powerful hands came down upon the narrow, bony shoulders. Unceremoniously he yanked the gentleman off his feet and dragged him behind the bushes.

"I'm a *des-s-perate* man!" hissed Mr. Shoebottom tensely. "One peep out o' yuh an' I'll br-r-rain yuh! Peel yourself!"

To facilitate matters Mr. Shoebottom himself tossed the plug hat and the gloves to the grass and pulled off the long-tailed afternoon coat of latest cut.

"You get me? I want your clo'ees an' I want 'em quicker'n blazes!"

The gentleman evidently had read somewhere that it is always best to humor a madman. He undressed faster than he ever got ready for bed in his

life, muttering, imploring, begging for mercy in abject terror, once a hasty glance convinced him that there was no help in sight.

"Here, you! Get into those panties an' fix this skin belt on top of 'em. Tighten it up; it'll help yuh to run faster. Quick, you ossified kangaroo, or I'll kuh-ill yuh! Me reg'lar diet's the hearts o' young chee-ildren an' I aint had nothin' to eat for a week! If yuh go tryin' to get away—!"

He glared menace at the cringing wretch, grabbed up the pile of clothes and retired to the creek which just here circled conveniently around behind the bushes and was not more than a couple of yards away. Mr. Shoebottom performed his ablutions with commendable haste and dressed himself ditto.

With everything on but the top hat and the coat, which wouldn't fit, he eyed the groveling scarecrow before him with supreme disgust.

"Stow it, you poor ninny! I aint going to hurt your measly hide. It's only walnut stain. If I had a brush I could make a slicker job of it, but I'll do the best I can for you. *Stand still!*"

In another minute the can of walnut stain was empty and Mr. Shoebottom stepped back to criticise his art with no little satisfaction.

"You're too puny for the part by rights, but you'll do, Tigilinus," he nodded. "Great Scott! he's *ba-ald*!"

He was. He hadn't a hair between him and heaven. The toupee slid to the ground, revealing a dome that rose to a blunt peak, white in the sunshine. When Mr. Shoebottom tried on the wig of long, coarse black hair that had once switched flies from the flanks of an old nag, it was much too loose.

So he sat down, kicked off the patent-leathers and yanked at the pearl-gray

socks without hesitation. He worked rapidly; for if the growing rumpus over in the nearest street meant anything, there was occasion for haste.

On went the boots again, tight as they were for him, and hurriedly knotting the socks together, he passed them over the wig and tied the ends tightly beneath the miserable and speechless wretch's pointed chin.

"Better take along the club, Ig. You may need it for defense," grinned Mr. Shoebottom more genially. "Now—you may go, Caius Cassius."

"You!—you!—!" sputtered the specimen with some show of returning consciousness.

"Never mind that!" snapped Mr. Shoebottom.

"I slipped my revolver into this pants'-pocket an' I got you covered." And he stuck one finger against the cloth to prove it. "Now *git!* Beat it! *Flee!*—for your life! In one minute I'll pull the trigger—!"

Ig-a-loo the Second was a swift sprinter. From the concealment of the bushes Mr. Shoebottom studied his action with admiration.

The next moment the pursuing crowd reached the common and a great roar went up at sight of the flying figure. After it pelted the whole howling mob, Ig-a-loo the Second threw one agonized look over his shoulder, and took wing!

Mr. Shoebottom knew better than to stop rowing before his boat bumped shore, and a very few minutes found him walking up Oxford Street, looking for No. 356.

Fortune favored him. As he turned in at the gate, young Mr. Crawford himself was just saying good-by to his wife on the veranda steps, blithely on his way to the appointment down town. Before Mr. Shoebottom got half through with his story, however, the young farmer's jaw



"Better take along the club, Ig," said Mr. Shoebottom.

was set and he looked like the saucer for a cup of trouble, while as for the "peach"—it was a caution how pretty she looked when she was angry.

It was a tribute to Mr. Shoebottom's sincerity that neither Crawford or his wife questioned the truth of his statements. He had a way with him, Mr. Shoebottom.

So waving aside their expressions of gratitude, he made for the gate. Without undue haste, but without wasting precious time, Mr. Shoebottom hied him to the railroad track just south of the town and walked thereon till he reached the Junction. There he boarded the first train that came along and bought a ticket from the conductor that took him as far as the first city up the line.

Once there, he hunted up a pawn-broker and transferred to a neat, serviceable business suit in exchange for his victim's finery, procuring also some silk hosiery; there was a gold watch, which he pawned for cash, and a roll of bills which didn't need pawning.

Later in the evening he boarded the Boston Express and read a newspaper till they were safely through Tilsonburg.

Later still, when he was finally satisfied that the commercial traveler who got on there and was sharing the smoking compartment with him was really what he appeared to be, Mr. Shoebottom permitted himself to relax.

"How's business?" he ventured.

"Punk! You couldn't sell ten-dollar bills for a dollar in that town back there—not this week—not in regular lines.

Old Boy demonstration, you know."
"Oh, that so?"

"An' say, I never laughed so much in all my life as I did this afternoon." And the genial drummer slapped his thigh.

"How's that?" inquired Mr. Shoebottom with mild interest.

"Why, the Wild Man belongin' to the street-fair show outfit broke loose an' ran all over the scenery an' then some, with half the town chasing him. Didn't have any too much on in the way of clothes, y'understand, an' say, it was funny!"

"That would be kind of funny," grinned Mr. Shoebottom.

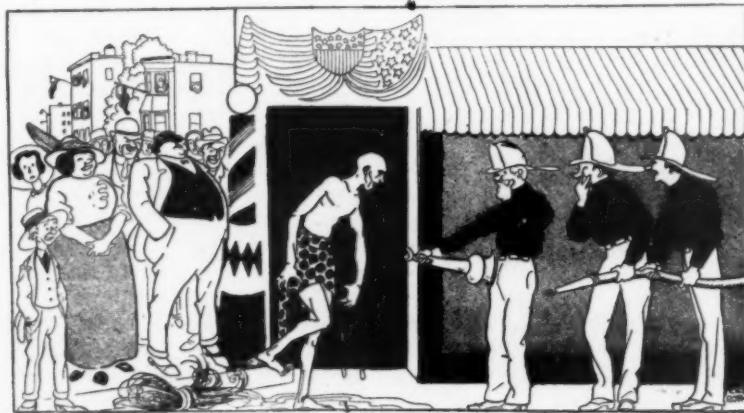
"The richest part of it was, though, that the son-of-a-gun got hold of one of the prominent citizens of the burg, backed him into a corner somewhere, swiped his clothes an' painted him up to look like him. Mob didn't tumble to it till they'd chased the wrong man clean down town. Somebody had got excited enough to ring in a fire-alarm an' the hose was out. They turned it loose on what they thought was the Wild Man, an' the paint came off him in streaks. The water blew the wig off an', Lordy! when they got through, there was that baldheaded sneak, Fennel, swearing blue mur—"

"Pardon me. Would you mind repeating that last part?" interrupted Mr. Shoebottom gently. "Who did you say it was?"

"Fennel, the lawyer. Know him?"

Mr. Shoebottom proffered his cigars.

"Have a smoke," he suggested, affably. "Take two of 'em."





The Innermost Heartbeat

By CLARENCE
B. KELLAND

I GUESS," said old Cap'n Corsan in quizzical tones which, nevertheless, failed to hide the wound, "I guess Sam's wife has got proclivities and propensities contrary to sea-goin' manners sich as I've accumulated durin' forty year of sailin' these lakes."

"She's some eddicated and stylish to the casual eye," his old friend Cap'n Fales rejoined. "Don't look like she was given to spillin' stuff on the tablecloth, or to settin' on the porch in a Mother Hubbard."

"She aint." Cap'n Corsan stated it with conviction. "She's filled with convictions and leanin's on various subjec's that wa'n't bothered much about when I was bein' taught *dee-corum*. I've watched her eat time and ag'in, and s'help me, Cap'n, if she don't do it by note like she was playin' a piece on the piano. She's versed on what to do with her hands and feet; and ev'ry time I make fast to their dinner-table I kin see she's rare skeptical regardin' the safety of the dishes. I've seen her hold her breath for minnits to a time."

"Um," grunted Cap'n Fales belligerently, "thinks she's too good for you, eh? High and mighty like. I've a notion to show her them newspaper clippin's about you when you come to retire. Likely she don't know presidents and governors and millionaires is glad to be knowned as your

pers'nal friends. I'd like to drop in on her and allude to them things. I've seen old hulks a-sailin' down this river painted over so's they look shiny and appetizin' enough to eat, that I wouldn't set foot onto for the amount of the insurance. Paint and brasswork is all right if the sea-goin' qualities is there—and so's manners and *dee-corum*; but stickin' up of noses aint in place anywherees."

"Don't git all het up, Cap'n. She's a mighty nice little thing, and that perty! She aint used to sich old grampuses as me, and no wonder. 'Course it sort o' hurts, but I wouldn't have Sammy know it for the world. It'd clean bust his heart—and he aint never noticed."

"He oughter," snorted Cap'n Fales.

Cap'n Corsan shook his head gently. "It'd be a cloud betwixt 'em, and I'd ruther go off somewhere and never see 'em ag'in than to be a cloud. I don't go there as much as I uster, and better so. I don't fit in, I calc'late."

"Sammy aint showin' no sich signs, is he?"

Cap'n's eyes lighted with pride. "Not any. Sammy, he thinks his ol' dad is some punkins, to hear him tell it—and to see him act it, which speaks a sight louder. Sammy, he never notices me pour my tea into my sasser, and he don't look up quick to see if I'm sayin' anythin' when I eat soup. I kin be plumb comfort'ble with Sam."

"He aint one of them kind colleges and sich kin sp'ile," said Cap'n Fales approvingly.

"I'm goin' up there to supper to-night—couldn't noways git out of it, Sammy bein' so pressin'. But I'm all 'iled up and polished, Cap'n, with my ingines runnin' smooth and quiet; I'm a-goin' to be that p'lite nobody'll know it's me. All the same, I feel like a tug enterin' a yacht race."

"Shucks," flared Cap'n Fales. "I reckon when Providence sees fit to send muddy roads it gits onto her shoes jist like it does on your'n."

"Maybe so—maybe so," twinkled Cap'n Corsan, "but she's a mighty sight spryer gittin' her'n cleaned off."

II

Cap'n Corsan dressed up as only an old lake-captain can dress: clothes black and a trifle too loose for comfort, collar a size too large, trousers with the crease carefully removed, shoes brought to the glossiest of shines by an hour of polishing—looking altogether as though craven out of wood, and as if he would squeak if he moved. Thus arrayed, did he appear at his son's house for dinner.

Sam's welcome was unmistakable in its heartiness; the reception given by the young wife was courteous but reserved and unconsciously forbidding. The Cap'n felt it—and she knew he felt it—and was ashamed. She suspected she was obsessed by a spirit of snobbishness, and struggled to overcome it and cast it forth; she tried to give the love of a daughter to this—to her—uncouth old sailorman, but the whole shaping of her life had made it impossible. At heart she was not a snob—abhorred snobs, in fact; but training, education, environment had all spent themselves to make her dainty, fastidious, sensitive to any breach of what she had been taught to see as good taste, gentility. She was an artificial snob, despising the quality in herself, unable to thrust it out.

Often she marveled at her husband, how he, with such a father, could himself be all she admired in a man: gentle, with unobtrusive gentility, possessing social distinction, easy, cultured as one

to the manner born. It bordered on the miraculous, she thought, because the fitness of the stock from which he sprang was hidden from her by the captain's fustian overgrowth.

Her husband was far from suspecting the repugnance she felt for his father: she knew how the knowledge would wound, so she concealed it as best she could. But from Cap'n Corsan she could not conceal it; knew she did not, and it added to her difficulty in meeting him. It was their secret—an uncomfortable one.

It was at the table that Cap'n Corsan felt the suppressed criticism of his daughter-in-law most keenly; for he ate, not with boorishness, but rather awkwardly; his manners were the manners of solid, clean-living farmer-folk of forty years ago, perhaps somewhat rustic, crude, but wholesome. It was apparent he enjoyed his food—which flies in the face of effeteness.

When he sat down between Sam and Marion he unfolded his napkin and tucked it into the throat of his vest, carefully arranging its folds to protect his garments from mishap. Marion's eyes watched the maneuver forbiddingly, and he, glancing up, felt their hostility and was uncomfortable. She saw the hurt look that came into his eyes and tried to smile unconcernedly, but only conjured up such a tolerant expression as one exhibits to ill-behaved children.

Thus embarrassed at the beginning, the Cap'n made hard going of it all the way. Again and again he was conscious of offending, though he knew not how or why. Marion was no less uncomfortable, for she was constantly striving against herself, remorseful, determined to make amends. Sam, on the contrary, was oblivious. He talked, joked, rallied his father and his wife; was unaffectedly proud of the old shipmaster; tried to bring him out and exhibit him to his wife as something wholly admirable. Marion was glad; the Cap'n felt his heart warm toward the boy.

Embarrassment increased awkwardness. Cap'n's copious sleeve, as he reached somewhat overfar for a slice of bread, overset a glass of water. Marion caught her breath; Cap'n blushed guiltily, but Sam only laughed heartily.

"Aren't you comfortable unless the deck is awash?" he joked.

Cap'n grinned sheepishly, and wriggled stiffly, his eyes on his plate.

"Seems like I aint competent to feed myself," he said apologetically.

His floundering words, their lack of grammatical purity, the use of the expression "feed myself" grated raspingly on Marion, and so sensitive were both that Cap'n was aware of it, and she knew he was aware.

Later she tried to put the old fellow at his ease—and blundered. Knowing his custom she suggested, "Perhaps you'd enjoy your tea more if you were to cool it in your saucer."

It was but natural that he should mistake her intention; he flushed piteously. She bit her lip and tears came into her eyes.

Samuel, his hunger—and it was honest hunger that needed genuine food—satisfied, became aware that there was not the atmosphere of geniality, not the jolly talk, the spontaneity he loved. He was used to hear his father's stentorian roar of laughter, his homely joke, to note the old man's voice grow louder as his story progressed to a boisterous climax. None were here. It puzzled him.

"Anything worrying you, Dad?" he asked solicitously.

Cap'n Corsan looked, startled, at his son, fearing the secret unsafe; but was reassured.

"I aint given up much to worry. What give you that idee?"

"You're not enjoying yourself—something's wrong. Business or what?"

"New shoes, if anythin'," parried the old fellow.

Marion's ears were pink, her eyes shining with held-back tears. It was an awkward moment for both of them.

"Aren't you feeling well?" insisted Sam.

For an instant the Cap'n flashed into naturalness. "If I felt any better'n I been feelin' this summer I'd bust." He held out a great, gnarled fist—uncouth, common, it seemed to Marion. "There aint come a time yit when any sailorman on these lakes kin stand up ag'in that."

Sam grinned delightedly.

Cap'n Corsan found excuse to go home

early. He had not enjoyed himself; he knew Marion had been miserable, and he wanted to be alone. He was cut to the heart, but bore it with brave face. Sam should never know—and Marion should not be blamed. It was nobody's fault, he insisted. "There's things that wa'n't meant by nature to mix—like sand and sugar,"—his humor asserted itself—"and when they do mix, folks' teeth is set on edge."

That night Marion cried into her pillow, much to the consternation of her husband.

III

It was some months later when Sam cut his father out of a herd of sailor cronies and walked with him down to the river and along the reedy banks, talking for a while about fish and politics and boats and prospects. Presently he cleared his throat with a little effort and asked, "How's it going to seem to be called Grand-dad?"

Cap'n Corsan stopped and slapped his thigh resoundingly. "No!" he exclaimed. "Honest?"

"Honest."

That was all they said; neither referred to the subject again, but the Captain's face was the face of a man who has heard glad tidings long hoped for. He fell silent, planning, looking into the coming years of splendor—for they seemed splendid to him. Sam talked on—unheard. Cap'n Corsan was watching himself, hand in hand with a small urchin, stepping up to the gaudy ticket-wagon of a circus. With the youngster he walked through the glories of the menagerie tent, sat through the spell of dizzy performances under the big canvas, listened to the child's delight. With the same boy he sat in an anchored boat, fishing; heard his grandson's shouts of triumph as flopping perch or shimmering bass was lured from below. He saw himself buying toys, carving little vessels. He saw a world full of himself and a boy—with all its wonders spread before their feet for their own use and behoof.

As they parted, Cap'n stood still beside his son a moment without speaking; then he said, as one who takes an im-

portant fact of the future for granted, "His name'll be Sam."

"Like yours and mine and grand-dad's," his son answered.

Cap'n Corsan went alone to sit on the dock and dream other dreams. His back against a spike, whittling stick in hand, he gazed off over the water seeing things that never yet had been, but which were sure to be—and it was a glorious hour, glorious, but not without its pang of foreboding.

There was Marion.

He had forgotten her; she had been omitted from his glowing panoramas, and must now be fitted in. But would she fit in? Here came the foreboding. Before he could dream other dreams her position in them must be discovered. Cap'n got up slowly, tired, seemingly troubled, and walked heavily home.

IV

Next morning when he knew his son was gone for the day, Cap'n Corsan went to see his daughter-in-law. With surprise she opened the door: he never came when Sam was not there. Cap'n hesitated a moment on the threshold; his eyes scanned her cultured, mobile, intelligent face; then he stepped inside.

"I come to see you all alone, Marion," he said gently.

"You know I'm always glad to see you, Captain." She never had been able to bring herself to call him Father.

"No, Marion, I don't know 's you be," he answered, still gently, his eyes pleading with her not to misunderstand, "and that's why I come."

She met his gaze fairly, then led the way into the library.

"Sammy's told me, and I'm glad for him and you—and me. Maybe Sam oughtn't to 've told me, you'll think; but he's always been fond of his old dad, and proud of him, too, I guess. It seemed nat'r'nal to him and me he should tell."

"Of course,"—tremblingly.

He waited a little, collecting his words, watching them, shaping them so they would neither hurt nor offend.

"This here baby's mighty important to me, him bein' my grandson; so, thinkin' ev'rythin' over I deemed it was best I

should come and talk it over with you."

She only nodded, not understanding clearly.

"I think a heap of your happiness, and Sam's, and I wouldn't throw no cold onto it, not for anythin' on earth. I wouldn't say a word to you unkind, and what I got to say aint meant that way. I got to say it though,"—he assumed a certain grave dignity in her eyes,—"'cause it's due to you and due to me and to Sam—and to leetle Sam that's comin'."

"Yes," she said breathlessly, "yes."

"You and me has had our secret." It was the first time it ever had been put into words. "We aint blamin' nobody, and we've both done our duty concealin' it—for it would have made Sammy main sorry to know. I guess I aint the kind of father-in-law you'd have picked—nor grandfather for your boy. I aint handy in a parlor, nor to a dinin'-table. I'm jist what nigh forty year of sailarin' has made me—and it goes ag'in you." She tried to speak, but he held up a hand for silence. "I aint s'prised—only sorry. It's never been held up agin you; and both of us has done our best; but now there's goin' to be a diff'rence, a mighty big dif'-rence.

"When Sam told me last night about his son," (How certain he was it would be a son, she thought.) "I was that happy I like to have stood right there and hollered with joy; and I begun figgerin' and plannin' what good times the leetle feller and me was goin' to have together. But right there I thought of you." He paused and raised his eyes to her face where he held them all through the rest of his stay. She was pale, biting her nether lip, wondering at his insight—for she guessed what was coming.

"What struck into my pleasure and drove it off was the idee that maybe, prob'ly, you wouldn't want your boy to be much with his rough old grand-dad, learnin' rough ways, bein' taught things by example he hadn't ought to know." He shook his grizzled head and smiled a bit wanly. "I know how quick children is to imitate their elders, and how they mimic them they're fond of and look up to. He'd look up to his old sailor grand-dad, you know," he said as though duty compelled him to make the matter clear.

"He would, 'cause he couldn't know how lackin' I be. You been thinkin' about this, aint you?" he asked directly.

"Yes," she replied distinctly.

"I'd try hard not to set him no bad example, and never to learn him nothin' he hadn't ought to know or do. His comin' is a big thing to an old feller like me, standin' at the far end of life. Him, and bein' with him, and lovin' him, and havin' him love me—that's the biggest thing I got to look forrud to. It aint as if I'd learn him anythin' *bad*. I want he should grow up to be a good man, and the kind of a man his father is, havin' eddication and manners and sich. I'd be *proud* of him.

"Now, Marion, I'll go by what you say. You're his ma, and the biggest thing there is to him—and him to you. I couldn't stay by him and not be *with* him. If you think I wouldn't harm him, I'll stay and do my best. Mebby I could fix up my manners a mite. If you say no we kin fix it up so Sammy wont be hurt. A man is always sure of a berth aboard ship so long's he owns vessels, and I'd tell him I was irked stayin' ashore—there's years of sailin' in me." The last was said with pride, if with the solemnity of a great anxiety. "What d'you say, Marion?"

She sat quiet, not answering. Then suddenly her self-restraint deserted her, and, bursting into sobs, she flung from the room to throw herself in a gust of weeping on the bed.

Her father-in-law's insight had penetrated that depth of her heart and read it aright, had seen her shrinking from that future companionship between her child and himself, had perceived how her spirit of mother-protection had aroused itself and looked with fear on that association. He had seen truly. She *did* fear for her son; had determined to shelter him from the coarsening influence of the unlettered, unmannered old shipmaster; to exclude her husband's father from the life of his own grandson. What such a determination would mean in terms of grief to Cap'n Corsan she had omitted to consider; now it struck home ruthlessly. The matter took to itself the magnitude of a crisis, an overwhelming crisis, in the hitherto easy walk of her

life. She must choose between hazarding the perfection of her child, and blasting the evening of Cap'n's life. The choice racked her; it entailed more than either renunciation or mother-duty, as she saw it, could rise to.

White faced, tense, fixed of eye, she sat on the edge of her disheveled bed and muttered now and again chokingly; and the burden of her mutterings was, "My baby...my baby...I can't risk it...I can't risk it."

V

"It's ridiculous—Father's taking a ship again. Says he got fidgety laying around doing nothing; and I thought he'd be so tickled with a grandson he'd be around here most of the time helping bring him up."

Marion sat very still and looked out of the window at the lilac bush before the porch. She had known her husband would not take kindly to Cap'n Corsan's resumption of a sailoring life, known the matter must be discussed between them, felt the shame of guilt of a hitherto honest man about to be discovered in crime.

"I can't understand it," her husband went on, and she could see how hurt, how deeply disappointed, he was. "Ever since we knew about little Sammy I've been thinking what a lucky kid he'd be with Dad around for a sort of example to live up to. I've sat at the office and imagined the little shaver imitating everything Dad said or did, and how Dad would talk to him, and chum with him, and drill into him, without ever knowing it himself, all of his own bigness. And now he's gone off sailing."

Still Marion was silent. Her husband glanced at her and saw tears brimming in her eyes. "I don't wonder you feel badly and hurt. But we mustn't make up our minds about it till we know more. Maybe Dad had a good reason. We mustn't blame him till we know. But it's hard to understand, now isn't it?"

"Yes," she murmured chokingly.

Cap'n Corsan made no explanation of his extraordinary decision to his son, and as the weeks went by the young man passed from hurt surprise and astonished

disappointment to a state of mind bordering on anger, anger with his father for taking so little interest in the coming boy, for slighting him, for avoiding so lightly the responsibilities of a grandfather. This change Marion watched, and the screws of torture were turned tighter. But she would not, could not, give in. Rather would she have put her child in physical peril than to risk those finer fibers of his being, the plastic material of his little mind, to the debasing influences and example of a rough, swearing, masterful old sailor man lacking in everything she had been taught as indispensable in a gentleman. So she suffered and was steadfast. Who shall say hers was not a sort of heroism?

Before long a nurse was established in the house—waiting; and the waiting was not for long. Strangely enough, chance or Providence or vital statistics, or whatever it is that regulates sex, was compliant: the child was a boy. He was born early in the evening, and somehow, Marion did not seem to care. She did not ask for him; he was not shown her, but was wrapped and disposed in his cradle, to which Sam tip-toed a score of times from his wife's bedside. Marion dozed and waked, in a sort of stupor, and Sam watched with eyes from which dread and terror were not yet departed. The doctor joked, said affairs could not have conducted themselves better, and went about his business, leaving the nurse in charge. Sam sat by the bed till morning.

Marion awakened early, looking almost her old self. She was pale, with traces not yet erased of the deep knowledge she had gained of things living and things dead, and of the sweetness of death, and of the wonder of departed pain. She lay still, with eyes closed, considering the world from the standpoint of one who has touched its innermost heartbeat with her own finger; of one who has earned her way into its noblest mysteries, and to whom its oracles are no longer obscure. She opened her eyes.

"I—want—to—see—him," she whispered.

Nurse, body-guarded by Sam, carried in her son and laid him beside her. Her arm closed about him, drew him close, made him comfortable as he could be

comfortable nowhere else, using the knowledge she had gained in those caverns of hidden things she had explored during the night. She closed her eyes again.

Wide as her new wisdom was, the touch of flesh that was of her flesh illumined it, multiplied it boundlessly. Before she had worshiped an abstraction; now she was a mother loving her child. Fear dawned. What if she should be made to part with her son? What if disposing powers demanded him of her? In that moment her love touched its loftiest peak, for what can love attain without fear of loss?

From her pinnacle of understanding, the earth and the things of the earth grew very small and poor and mean. Peoples and princes and societies and states and conventions and laws shrank and became of little worth. Caste and creed vanished. Nothing remained but the supreme law, the immortalizing of mankind, obedience to which is its own supreme reward.

What if she must give him up? Then the question presented itself less personally, less selfishly. What if *they* must give him up—her husband and herself. She knew intuitively that Sam worshiped the child in like measure to herself. She gave thought to his share in the matter. Then, inevitably, Cap'n Corsan intruded. She gave a little sob, and her husband looked at her in quick alarm, but she smiled at him.

Cap'n Corsan! Now she realized what she had inflicted on him, appreciated the enormity of her offence against him, and the grief he must be suffering. Before she had not known what it was to love a child, for there had been none to love; now she knew—and could understand the yearning she had seen in the old man's eyes.

Besides, she had rested on her pinnacle and viewed the kingdoms of the earth, and beholding, had found them dross. It had been given her to see creation as it is, with one thing compared to another, all in true proportion. Henceforth she could choose the better from the worse. Before she had been fine, but with an artificial superfineness; now she was fine with truth, refined by ordeal.

With the eye of her mind she scrutinized Cap'n Corsan and knew not why she had rejected him. For the first time she saw him with eyes unstopped by crude externals. She saw his bravery, the heroism of his sacrifice; knew how great a thing he did when he went away at her bidding, for her sake and for the sake of her son. She opened her eyes wide and smiled at her husband—a smile of joy.

"Have—you—told—*Father?*" Never had she called him so before.

He shook his head and compressed his lips. She understood.

"Wire—him. Come—at—once. Sign—my—name."

Nothing could be refused her now. The message was written at her dicta-

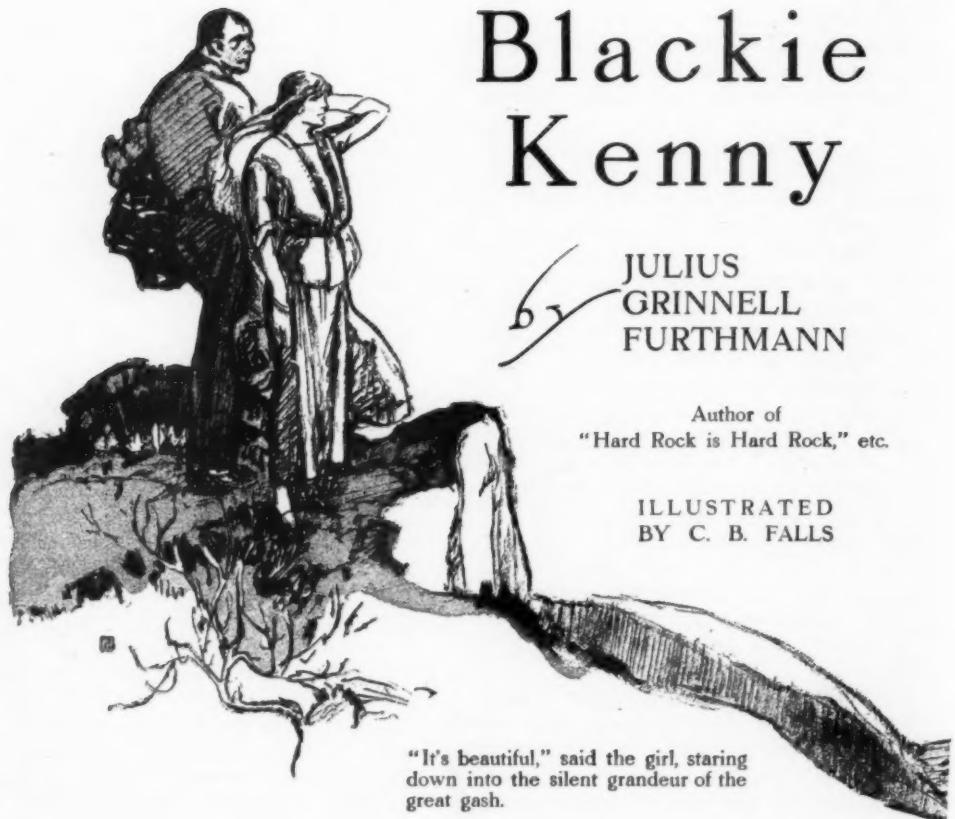
tion, and sped on its way to the Soo, where Cap'n Corsan's vessel lay blockaded by upbound traffic.

Next morning the Cap'n's step was heard on the stairs. Diffidently, doubtfully, hopefully he crept into the room. Marion's eyes awaited him, and what lay therein was plain to read. He sank on his knees by the bed.

"I—sent—for—you,"—she paused to rest—"so—you—could," —another rest—"teach—little—Sammy—to—be—" once more weariness overcame her—"to—be—just—like—you."

Then she slept, and Cap'n Corsan knelt immovable, save only to reach for and take a tiny, reddish hand and hold it gently in his own.





Blackie Kenny

JULIUS
GRINNELL
FURTHMANN

Author of
"Hard Rock is Hard Rock," etc.

ILLUSTRATED
BY C. B. FALLS

"It's beautiful," said the girl, staring down into the silent grandeur of the great gash.

FEW good women come into the life of the hard rock man. When one does, he raises her upon a pedestal, and accords her the same reverence he gives his work, his great cuts and dikes, which, as sailors their ships, he calls Her and She. But a woman cannot understand this. To her these big men are strange creatures, strong yet weak, wise yet very foolish, sometimes heroic, yet utter children. So she wonders why their hearts do not fit in the hollow of her hand.

The barrack-like bunk house was filled with the sounds of men in various stages of sleep. There was a soft droning purr, a series of stertorous gasps, and, occasionally, a loud, prolonged snore. The mingled odor of tar-paper, woolen blankets, and sweaty bodies accentuated the heavy atmosphere of the place. In the north end of the building three men

carried on a low-voiced conversation in a stall sparingly lit by the thin, dancing flare of a candle. The two big men sprawled out on the narrow bed were Blackie Kenny and Gunner Gallegher. Both were hard rock men—Kenny a rock foreman and the Gunner a driller. The other man was Red Cobleigh. He sat on a wooden stool, his broad back against the door.

"I want a third," he said, "and the woman."

The Gunner grinned. He bulked large as he drew himself up on the edge of the cot, a big man, deep of chest, with shoulders like broad ledges of rock. "Yer idea is grand, Red, but I'm—"

Red Cobleigh moistened his lips. "Listen," he growled. "The pay wagon carried twelve thousand this month. I got it from McCann."

McCann was commissary clerk at Camp Ten for Grant Brothers, railroad

contractors. He was Scotch, and his first name was Robin.

"Four thousand apiece," said Kenny. "It's a long shot, Gunner, but it beats looting post offices and shooting hard rock. Why, a feller could settle down," he added, staring.

"What's yer plan, Red?" asked the Gunner.

Red Cobleigh scowled. "I want a third," was the answer, "and the—"

"No hurry," broke in Kenny. "Skirts allus make trouble. How d'ye know Long Tom will get in to-morrow? Are ye sure?"

"Dead sure. I was talking to McCann less than an hour ago. He gotta message from headquarters that Long Tom Grant and his body-guard would be here for dinner."



The speaker checked himself warily, then resumed: "Now, did I hear ye say that old Red gets his third, and the—"

"Is that Scotch loon, McCann, gonna be in on this?" asked Kenny.

"Nah. Can't ye see, I'm just pumping him and bulling him along?"

There was a moment of silence, which the Gunner broke. "Well, how about the men? I wanna know a thing or two first. Here's two hundred-odd hard rock men. It's easy enough to talk of splitting three ways, but if ye can't pull the trick without 'em, ye can kiss the Book they're gonna have a finger in the pie. Aw, Red, ye must be sick!"

Red Cobleigh swore a short and ready word. "It's my plan, aint it? I know ye both. Yer very smooth, very smooth. What yer after is information. Now, boys, do ye say aye to my side of the deal?"

For answer Kenny gave a little noiseless laugh. Kenny's laugh made the Gunner smile. Red Cobleigh stood up.

"So that's it," he grated, with a kind of leer. "Ye think ye got me sewed up, eh? Well, just let dear old Red hear a word out of ye, and he'll—" He broke off. His eyes shone. His lips moved without sound. He was a squat, bronzed man, with a tangle of reddest hair, a great beak of a nose, and a hooked chin. He looked like a man certain crime would leave pensive. He had the forehead of a murderer relieved by the mild blue eyes of an archbishop.

"No hurry, Red," said Kenny, gently. "That little matter's easily fixed. If I should want the skirt I'll take her. That's Blackie Kenny for ye!" He paused amid an ominous silence. Then: "But how about the men? Wont ye sit down, Red?"

Red Cobleigh kicked the stool aside.

"Gunner," drawled Kenny, "will ye ask Mister Cobleigh to sit down?"

In a tick of the clock the Gunner was up and with a dart of his long arm he gripped Cobleigh's ear and spun him around with a wrench. In the same instant he caught him by the opposite wrist, so as to stretch the man's arm, elbow back, across his own great chest, a posture in which the lightest pull brought a low moan of agony from the victim. Only a big man with extraordinarily long arms could have done the thing exactly like that.

"Come, Red," suggested the Gunner, "sit down. I wont hurt ye. There's a good little feller."

Red Cobleigh sat down suddenly. Under an imposing physique he hid craft, but no courage. Kenny nodded with a friendly grin.

"Boys, I gotta plan to turn the trick," Cobleigh began less truculently. But there was a bleak fierceness in his voice. His face looked gaunt, almost fanatical. He was interrupted frequently, and questioned, and this style of conversation went on, in which the slowness of their voices emphasized the violence of their attacks and retorts, and added irony to menace.

It was a grim plan. It was the plan of a man who knew how to play upon the passions of strong men and flatter their

desires. Kenny was a hard man, as hard men go; so was the Gunner, but both were sweating at the last. Red Cobleigh concluded with: "A camp full of men is like a house full of kids. When a kid asks ye for the moon, ye give him a toy. He soon forgets the moon. A mob is like that—once ye get 'em on the go. We'll give 'em a flash o' gold, a big to-do in the getting of it, a woman for a touch o' color, a little fire and a little flame, and a great camp and about three tons of dynamite to play with, and then—"

Camp Ten was one of a ten-link chain of rock-and-dirt camps flung out over two hundred miles of the Mojave Desert by Grant Brothers, railroad contractors. They were building a railroad grade straight as the crow flies between Mojave, California, and Reno, Nevada. Draw an imaginary line between these two points, deviating at the shores of Dry Lake. The curve will take your line through the extreme eastern flank of the Tehachepi Mountains. This locates the rock, dirt, open-cut, and tunnel work of Camp Ten.

The camp itself lay in a depression formed by four great hills. Two men are given supreme authority in a big railroad camp like this. They are the superintendent and the walking-boss. The walking-boss of Camp Ten was Red Cobleigh.

There was only one woman in the camp. She kept house for her brother, Daniel J. King, who was a graduate of Boston Tech and at present a tunnel engineer. Her name was Barbara King. She was engaged to Howard Whiddon, the superintendent of Camp Ten. He was a nice young fellow, whose mother was a Grant.

The day came with stealth. Ripple on ripple of light surged from the hymning east. The great rock reluctantly took shape. A girl climbed the rocky path that chipped its way up the great white face of the cliff.

About reared the dark, monstrous torso of the mountain, tier on tier, nebulous, silent in the hurrying light. The girl paused only upon the flat, rugged head. Deep draughts of the cool rare air

refreshed her like a flagon. She drew near the edge of the cliff, a light wind whipping her lifted face and soft frock—revealing an almost opulent grace of shoulder, arm, and bosom—a tall, lithe figure swept with a loosening tangle of fair hair.

Fold by fold, the sun's fingers plucked away the golden mists that hid the plain. Far below, the desert spread out in silent wonder to a horizon bursting into soft flame.

A shaft of light smote the face of rock. With a quick movement the girl flung her hair to the dawn-wind. It was a generous sacrifice of red gold. She looked like a wild, beautiful sprite of the rock.

"Careful, Sis," said a harsh voice. "Yer too close to the edge." A rough hand plucked at her waist.

The girl swung around. She saw at her elbow a big, dark man with black hair, eyes packed away under a black brow, and a great clean-shaven jaw that looked as sullen as death. It was Blackie Kenny.

"Oh!" The girl smiled a greeting. She knew Kenny by sight. "I was looking down into this wonderful rock-cut."

She pointed below. An unfinished railroad cut scowled back. It was hewn through the right flank of the mountain, and, on the far side, forever isolated from the mother rock, reared a mighty shaft of silver limestone. It lifted a profile of white, straight, beautiful lines. Somehow, the hand of man and powder had chastened the wild face and body of the stubborn rock to a newer beauty.

Blackie Kenny was the rock foreman of this cut. Once, Hempstead, inspecting engineer for the railroad, had pointed it out as a rather neat piece of work, and inquired the name of the foreman. Thereafter Camp Ten had taken a certain pride in the master hard rock man and his work. Kenny himself had fought several critical new chums.

"It's beautiful," said the girl, staring down into the silent grandeur of the great gash. "Isn't it odd how the sight affects you?"

Kenny rose to the bait. The girl had a quaint satisfaction in hearing him speak out very proudly, as an artist of his masterpiece. She grew the more curious.

"You hard rock men take great pride in your work, don't you?" she pursued, oddly.

Kenny grinned.

"You must love it?"

As she pleased! "It's kind of fun, Sis. The rock has a way of fighting back. It's all in the way ye go at it. The Old Gal is as ticklish to handle as a woman. Now some men mightta got sore at Her and made a quarry outta the place. Another thing: She'll last a long time. Why, the Old Gal will be lifting her pretty head to the sun and moon a million years after us poor devils who built these trails have gone over the Big Hill. That's something. That's more than most men can say. And it's going to be a big, fine looking piece of work when I get through with Her. Only a couple of days now, and I'll have Her—"

He broke off suddenly. A queer trick of thought had stopped him. He was thinking of Red Cobleigh and his plan.

The girl, meanwhile, wondered at his abruptness, but found herself regarding the man with increased respect. As for Kenny, he gazed abstractedly at the rose-white beauty of her cheek. All at once the girl realized that her hair was unbound.

"You have fine hair," said Kenny.

With a quick movement she shook it out, tilted her chin, and looked at him out of the corners of her eyes. Boston suddenly seemed a million miles away. She guessed her power over this man. She was young, and a woman.

Kenny, who had the sun in his eyes, saw the girl as through a golden mist. Stretching out a hand, he touched her hair as it poured over her shoulders, for the red gold strands seemed magnetic to his fingers, and the glimmer of her eyes made his tough flesh creep.

"You have fine hair," he repeated, at a loss. She puzzled him—which is what men are for.

"I learned that long ago," she said, drawing the strand away.

"It's like a flash o' red gold."

"It reaches nearly to my feet." And the girl looked at him over her shoulder, while she bound the glossy bands.

Kenny said nothing, but gazed past her into sun and plain, shading his eyes

with his hand. Barbara King watched his face curiously. It was the profile of a strong, stark man, whose every feature spelt great hardihood and alert daring. She wondered at a keen, half cruel look about the tight lips and impatient eyes.

Then she sighed, and the sigh meant that men are strange. "What do you see?" she asked presently, to fill the gap.

"Look," bid the man.

Against the sky-line could be seen a number of jerking specks moving fast over the plain. They were the figures of men driving and riding.

"It's the pay wagon," muttered Kenny. "Long Tom and his men will get in by noon!" he added, with a chuckle, and, without a word, turned and ran down the rocky path nimbly as a goat.

The girl's full red lips puckered in a quaint pout as she watched him go.

When Kenny reached camp the men were at breakfast. More than two hundred hard rock men sat eating at four long tables in the long, low-built cook-house. They helped themselves mightily from immense platters of steaming food. Kenny slipped into a vacant place beside the Gunner.

"So far so good," he said. "Long Tom is on the way. Camp Ten's his first stop out of Eighteen-Mile Siding. There won't be a nickel of that twelve thousand missing. Red says it's mostly in paper; I bet one man could carry it all. Gunner, me boy, will ye open the ball as we planned?"

All things in order! Thus they fell out. The whistle was sonorously calling the men to dinner at noon when Long Tom Grant, the paymaster, went into the cook-house with three dusty riders of his bodyguard. One man was left to guard the pay chest, which could be seen in the bottom of the paymaster's four-wheeled buggy. Three sawed-off shot-guns lay neatly stacked across the seat.

The lone guard paced back and forth through the soft hot dust. And the sun bulked high and white. In one of the bunk houses somebody was caroling "The Lay of the Boston Burglar."

There were small groups of men sitting on the porch of the bunk house. Already an impatient band of men sprawled on the cook-house steps. Others

continued to join them by twos and threes—then a big figure swung around the bend in the road. It was the Gunner, looking careless and free.

At the same instant Blackie Kenny appeared on the bunk house porch, wiping his face with a soiled towel—and Red Cobleigh stood in the doorway of the commissary shack, just across the way. When he caught Kenny's eye he pointed to the single telephone wire overhead.

"No hurry," said Kenny's nod. "I cut the wire at the draw as I came in."

Meanwhile the singer broke into the

leaned over the prostrate man, holding to his weapon. As he bent down, a big foot swung up from the ground and broke his jaw in two places. He crumpled into the soft hot dust without a whimper.

"Aint that too bad?" said the Gunner, sitting up. "Here's this little feller getting hisself hurt on my foot. I'm often took this way. They're bound to say I did it on purpose. The chances are they'll even accuse the boys of trying to rob their old pay chest!" He spoke with the soft, quizzical, well-anointed utterance of the blarneying islander, which never



"Where's the pay chest?" roared Red Cobleigh, and the mob stood breathless, like a tiger in leash.

last verse of the "Lay," the twenty-third, in which the "Boston Burglar" observes that he was ruined in his youth, because his father and mother let him go round the streets at night to break the law of man; and Kenny saw the Gunner stroll past the pacing guard and accost one of the men on the steps. Red Cobleigh disappeared into the commissary.

The guard wheeled. At the turn he saw the Gunner suddenly totter and fall. The men on the steps came to life. The Gunner lay threshing feebly on his back. A soapy white froth flecked his lips.

"It's a stroke!" cried the guard. He

leaves the scion of the poorest exile from old Erin until the third generation.

The gathering crowd stared at him in a sort of stupefied wonder. There was an odd commotion, a panic uncertainty. As for the Gunner, he merely grinned, and, biding his time to the psychological instant, shut his left eye in a shrewd wink.

That, and his quick: "Who's with us, boys?" caught the crowd. A hard rock man is a yeggman under the skin. The Gunner wasted little time. He sprang up, and the men looked to him for orders.

"Well?" said one. "This seems to be yer party, Gunner. What next?"

For reply the Gunner picked up the weapon of the stunned guard, and, after a moment's thought, replaced it with the others on the buggy seat.

"Boys," he said, "let's take it easy. First we'll go up in the cook-house and break the news, gentle-like, to our old friend, Long Tom, and his men. Will a couple of ye bring a few bits of good rope? It would do no hurt."

An eager mob crept up the steps of the cook-house to do his bidding. And thus the pay chest was left unguarded. In less than two minutes Kenny and the Gunner reappeared on the cook-house steps with their men. There was a shout of surprise, and in a twinkling all eyes were turned toward the road. For, between the shafts of the paymaster's buggy, pulling for dear life up the road, ran the Scotch commissary clerk, Robin McCann, and the squat, burly figure of the walking-boss, Red Cobleigh!

With a hoarse roar, the mob scrambled down the slope. A queer thing happened. For the first time Kenny and the Gunner hung back. They knew the wheels of Red Cobleigh's plan were beginning to turn. Said Kenny: "I wanna know something. How about McCann? Red says that he aint in on the deal." The Gunner answered: "He aint. Red's just bulling him along.. He's doing that so—"

The mob swirled up the road like black water. It was taking things pretty much in its own hands by now. The buggy flew on and whisked around the first bend. At the top of the hill the vanguard of the pursuit saw the buggy careening wildly down grade. Two figures ran beside it.

"Too late," was the shout. "They've picked up the super' and engineer on the fly and are going to take cover in the powder-house!"

Breathless, the main body of the mob reached the brow of the hill in time to see the fugitive buggy slacken pace at the mouth of the canyon. They saw the figures stop at the draw and lift the pay chest out of the rig, and then run up a narrow path which led to a small frame building painted a bright red. Another figure, which several passionately recognized as that of Robin McCann, carried in the weapons.

"That red-headed devil's a wonder!" whispered the Gunner to Kenny under cover of the deep, baffled roar of the mob. "He's got this thing guessed out to a punch. We're nothing but a lot of dancing dolls. Red Cobleigh's the lad that pulls the strings—"

"D'y'e think he'll be able to make good with the men?"

"Make good?" The Gunner gave a great laugh. "Say, they'll follow him like so many sheep when he turns up the super' and that bunch, and gives 'em a whack at the powder!"

At this moment a girl darted out of the second red and green cottage, clutching a picture hat and a large box of chocolates. Automatically the maw of the mob opened and closed. A rough twitter fell. The heavy-jowled, barbaric faces stared at her like the malign masks of a dream. She stood there, a mass of red gold rippling to her waist, and a pair of big blue eyes blazing with anger and fear.

"How dare you laugh?" she flared.

A hairy hand plucked at her waist with a leer. Kenny struck the man from behind. He spun around and fell, and Kenny grabbed the girl's wrist.

"Yer friends are waiting for ye at the powder-house. I gotta hunch they're dying for some of them chocolates. So I'll count ten for ye to go. Can ye run?"

The girl smiled.

"One—"

A low growl rose among the men.

"Two—"

Barbara picked up her skirts.

"Three—"

She fled down the road like a deer. Kenny turned in time to see the man he had knocked down spring up like a wild-cat. A knife flashed. With nine men out of ten the blow would have gone home. Kenny was the exception. He caught the man's wrist as it descended, ducked beneath it, and jerked downward. The man's elbow cracked noisily; the knife fell; and the mob gave a great laugh to see Kenny boot his assailant headlong.

"Anyone else?" asked Kenny, and then the mob split up in two big parties—one to forage the camp, under the Gunner, and the other, under Kenny, to besiege the powder-house.

Kenny made no hurry. Approaching the powder-house, he threw out a wary line of skirmishers. A rattling, long-range volley of buck shot which dismayed farther approach was the prompt answer. Kenny distributed picket lines, effectually cutting off all chance of escape from the spot, and returned to camp.

Of the besieged party, which consisted of the girl, her brother, the superintendent, Robin McCann, and Red Cobleigh, the latter was the only one who really missed his supper.

Night had fallen, and the cook-house was in flames when Kenny reached the top of the hill. The dry timbers burned like matchwood. Kenny waited, and presently the Gunner came up.

"There goes my supper," growled Kenny. "I aint had a bite since breakfast."

The mob was dancing around the burning building in a yelling circle. The flames wreathed and played as in a fiendish joy. And the yells rose to a terrible howl. So Hecuba howled, says friend Homer.

"They've gone mad," muttered Kenny, staring.

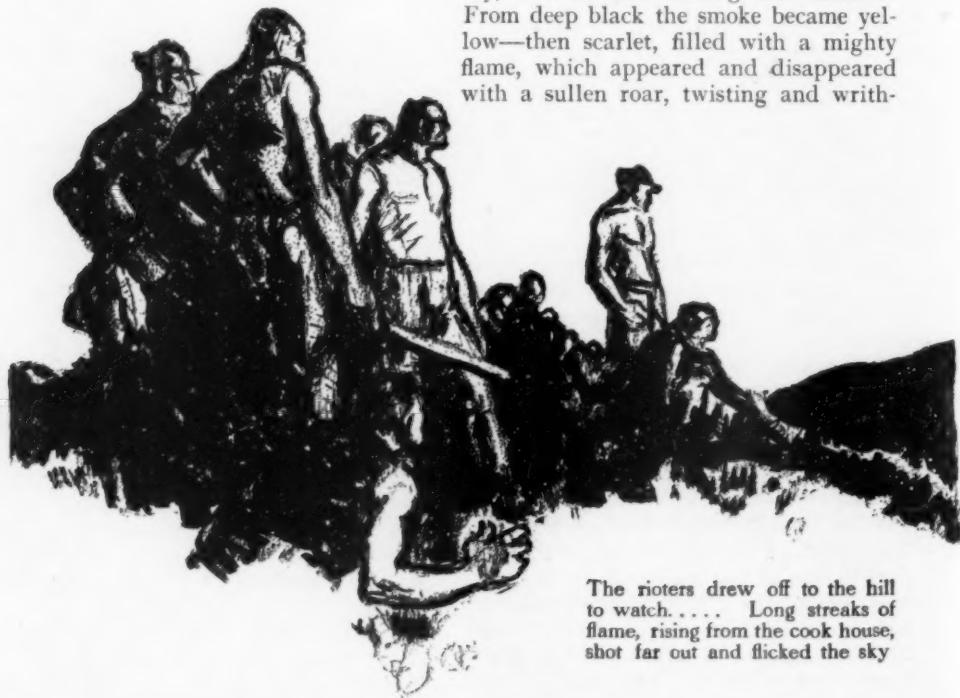
"Just wait till they get the powder," chuckled the Gunner. "I betcha they wont leave a rock in five miles standing on edge when they're done. The camp is a goner. Ye'll see some rare fun on this old grade, and ye can kiss the Book on that!"

While Kenny made no answer, his thoughts revolved toward an odd conclusion.

A billow of cheering broke from the men. They had spread the flame to the commissary shack, then to the bunk houses. Fire and flame are supreme toys in the hands of little men. There is nothing more chaotic and more sublime and more ridiculous.

Presently the conflagration unfurled all its evil splendors. Black hydra and scarlet dragon appeared in awful blackness and gorgeous vermillion. The rioters drew off to the hill to watch. They were quieter now.

Long streaks of flame, rising from the cook-house, shot far out and flicked the sky, like comets chasing one another. From deep black the smoke became yellow—then scarlet, filled with a mighty flame, which appeared and disappeared with a sullen roar, twisting and writh-



The rioters drew off to the hill to watch. . . . Long streaks of flame, rising from the cook house, shot far out and flicked the sky



ing in huge serpentine coils. Suddenly middle shades were ruled out. It was a world of ink and fire.

Late that night Red Cobleigh watched a big, silent figure creep catlike up to the north window of the powder-house. He was on guard, and, laying aside his weapon, he leaned out with: "That you, Blackie?"

Kenny answered. In a minute the two men stood talking in whispers a short distance from the open window. There was no moon, but the great stars gave the night a kind of glimmering clearness.

"Where's yer gun, Red?" asked Kenny, presently.

Red said he'd left it inside the window. Then he heard the other give a soft chuckle, and in the next instant something happened which cannot be explained.

Aloud, Kenny said: "Here he is, Gunner. Take care of him, will ye?" And a huge figure rose up from the earth, and, clasping Red Cobleigh by the throat, took care of him very quietly.

Kenny climbed through the unguarded window. An upturned case of giant powder served as a pedestal for a flaring candle. He grinned and looked around. Two men were stretched out in the shadow-dark—McCann and the young engineer—and before the barricaded threshold lay Whiddon, the superintendent. All breathed with a lightly ster-torous sound. They say the fumes given off by dynamite possess a mild soporific effect.

The girl slept on the rough pine floor in the middle of the room. Kenny stood over her. The dim light haloed her face with a quiet radiance. Her hands were crossed on her breast, and the man gazing down at her face saw it drawn and haggard even in sleep. It held a kind of tragic fairness. The flesh shone like white wax, and the bright hair, loosened to pillow her head, gleamed like a net of gold.

Kenny muttered something to himself, and picking up the candle, stole into the next room. Here was stored the dynamite. Giant powder by the case confronted him in tier after tier, and back of it, a ceiling-high pyramid of black powder

cans. Kenny set the candle on the floor, dropping two tiny brass primers and two ten-foot lengths of black fuse beside it, and went swiftly to work on a centrally located case of giant powder. To the initiate, a foot of fuse means sixty seconds of time, and ten feet meant—

"Ten minutes," muttered Kenny. "It wont take me any longer than that to pull this little trick!"

When he crept back into the next room he was coatless. He waved the candle twice before the open window and then blew out the flame.

At the signal, the Gunner reluctantly lifted his great bulk from Red Cobleigh's heaving chest, and, in turn, signaled to the waiting men in the canyon below. The mob marched up the slight decline without a sound, without a word,

three men on the floor came to life. A big shadowy figure sprang into their midst and struck with both fists. Whiddon rolled on the floor. The young engineer dropped like a stricken ox. McCann clutched Kenny's knees in a death grip. Kenny beat him down, but Whiddon, rising, made for Kenny with a broken ax-handle.

Heavy blows resounded on the barricaded door. The girl screamed; Whiddon sprang back, and the door fell with a great crash. He was hemmed in by a horde of wolf-like beings, shoved back, struck at. His club swung in the dark like a flail. One, two, went down. The girl's screams broke out afresh as rough hands pawed at her. Then a candle flashed up and illuminated the scene.

Blackie Kenny stood in the middle of



Kenny stood back, while the gunner fumbled at the lock. "Twelve thousand dollars," he said. "An even six thousand apiece."

almost without an audible breath. Such is the march of wolves, hunting in pack.

Indoors, Kenny picked up the pay chest, upon which Red Cobleigh had sat while keeping guard at the window, and tossed it out on the ground where the Gunner would find it.

The girl awoke with the thud.

"Howard!"

As you know, Howard was the superintendent. Instantly she cried out, the

the room facing Red Cobleigh. "Hullo, Red!" said he, a little out of breath.

"Where's the pay chest?" roared Red Cobleigh, and the mob stood breathless, like a tiger in leash.

"No hurry," said Kenny, looking sly. "Let's see,"—scratching his head. "Where did I put it? Why, I nearly forgot! Red, me boy, ye'll find it in the next room. I covered it with my coat."

Several of the men jeered his crest-

fallen air. As for Red Cobleigh, he burst into the next room, and, in less time than it takes to count ten, reappeared, his face a livid green, which was his way of turning pale.

"Aint ye the smart Aleck?" he sneered at Kenny, and turned to the men without waiting for a reply. "This guy's clean off his dip. Whatcha think? *He's tried to blow us all up!* I was just in time to nick a hot fuse he'd fired in a case of giant! Less than two foot long it was, and—"

With that, several men sidled awkwardly toward Kenny.

"No hurry," he said, addressing Red Cobleigh, whose squat figure had swollen like that of a huge spider. "I thought ye'd find it so, Red. I was figuring on yer hasty disposition. That's why I loaded the case with two fuses—*one in front and one in back!*"

He resumed, to a deathly quiet: "It's about a foot long by now, and spitting toward hell like an ugly cat, so that



gives ye fifty odd seconds to make yer get-away before the shot makes a quarry out of this pretty little canyon—"

Somebody breathed in once, hard.

"My God," said Red Cobleigh with vast respect—and dived for the door.

His ungainly exit awoke the others from their stupor; there was a staccato yowl of pure terror and a mad scramble.

In less than five seconds the powderhouse was empty save for the stupefied figures of the girl, her brother, and the superintendent.

Then Blackie Kenny appeared in the door, and, in the next instant, booted the two men headlong over the threshold, one after the other, and picking up the swooning girl, rushed after them.

The first instants of the stampede were awful. Red Cobleigh had led it. The terrified men broke and ran in all direc-

tions. It was a silent, monstrous rush. The main body poured up through the doomed canyon like water through a sieve, and dispersed into the open country beyond with the rapidity of clouds carried by a whirlwind. There was no looking back. Some fled north, some south, others east.

As for the girl, she felt herself carried an inconceivable way, and set down. Everything seemed to transfer itself to infinite distance, and a sound like the sea sobbed in her ears. The mind often fastens itself most readily on trifles in times of stress; she heard a familiar voice say there was no hurry, that they were almost a quarter-mile from the powderhouse, that they'd be all right unless the mountain took a notion to stand on its head, and that it was a fine place to see the fireworks. Then the whole world seemed to reel and flop, and oblivion swept over her brain.

It was shortly after daybreak when Kenny and the Gunner left the others standing on the flat, rugged head of the rock and descended the path. The girl, her brother, and the superintendent watched them go.

Somehow, the girl felt disappointed. She had expected something different. At the foot of the path Kenny stopped and looked back. The girl frantically waved her free hand, while the superintendent held the other quite fast.

"Aw, she makes me tired," Kenny said, turning away. "She thinks I done it for her. Aint that just like a woman? I gotta hunch she was looking for me to pull off some grandstand play up there on the rock. Just take a slant at them, Gunner. Holding hands like a couple of kids!"

At a point where the grade made a "fill" of the canyon, Kenny paused for a parting glance at the great dike of rock that loomed up under the bosom of the mountain. It was his unfinished railroad cut.

"Good-by, Old Gal!" he muttered. His eyes fairly seemed to caress the straight, beautiful lines of the great gash. Inanimate objects have a strange power. A tower watches; a statue observes; but when strong men seek strange gods they aim high. Some bow down to a

planet; others worship a great face of rock. Both possess a vast contemplative grandeur.

"Old Gal," said Kenny, "I'm coming back. The super' says I can come back and finish Ye.... Honest, I didn't have anything against Red Cobleigh. I wouldn't have double-crossed him—only he was willing for the men to shoot Yer pretty head off! I couldn't stand for that, Old Gal, could I? He was too willing!"

Then, with an odd duck of his head, Kenny turned away and walked down the canyon with the Gunner, who presently broke the silence.

"What'd ye say to the super' when he asked about the pay chest?"

Kenny laughed. "Say, that guy's got the heart of a fish and the running gear of a katydid! I told him I was awful sorry—but I was pretty sure the pay chest had gone up with the powder-house. The girl was the only one who saw the joke when I said none of that kale would be spent this side of hades."

"I'm kinda glad ye pulled 'em out of that hole," said the Gunner as they picked their way through a huge bunker of quarry-like *débris* which stretched for about two hundred yards above and below the former site of the powder-house.

"I had to do it. That's what makes our get-away so clean and safe. Nobody's hurt; nobody can make a holler. Why, the super' says he's gonna mention our

names in his report, and maybe we'll get a reward from the company for saving the grade. I give him a Los Angeles address—in lower Fifth Street."

They reached the elbow of the canyon on the other side of the ruined camp before either spoke again. Said the Gunner: "There aint no use in us packing the junk over the hill in a lump, Blackie. Why not count it and split right now?" He pointed to a spur of rock a short distance ahead. "There's the box, big as life, just where I left her last night—"

And there on a flat knob of rock, as snug and tight as you please, right side up and a bit of brass glinting in the sun, sat the pay chest.

Kenny stood back while the Gunner fumbled at the lock.

"Twelve thousand dollars!" he said. "An even six thousand apiece—"

He heard the Gunner swear—then give his great laugh.

"Here's yer share, Blackie,"—handing him a soiled piece of white paper scribbled over on both sides. It was a note, in a marvelous scrawl.

Dere Blacky

I kame Back. Yu two are purty Fancy. I wooda left yu carfare to Los but As yu beat Me to the Skurt and The gunner pulled My hair when He had Me down I guess We are all square. So Long.

Red.



The Fairy Godfather

*An unusual role
for Attorney Kirkham*

by ELLIOTT FLOWER

Author of "A Bundle of Banknotes," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

R. M. BRINKERHOFF

TIM CARNEY, lolling on a park bench and wondering where he would get the meal that his stomach told him was already overdue, caught the glint of something bright in the grass. He rubbed his eyes and looked again.

"Nix," he mumbled, "it aint so. I'm goin' dotty."

Still the little yellow disc glistened in a way to dazzle the eyes and imagination of a man in his impoverished condition. He leaned over slowly, as if still doubtful, but when his hand was within six inches of the object the strain of restraint was too much and he made a quick grab for it.

He examined it critically, closed his eyes a moment, and then opened them and examined it again. His conclusion was the same as before.

"Nix, not," he said; "it aint so. I'm seein' things."

Nevertheless, he was so far convinced of the reality of the object that he has-



He examined the gold piece critically.

tilly slipped it into a pocket as a policeman approached.

"Git a move on!" ordered the policeman. "This aint no loafin' place fer hoboes."

"Who's a hobo?" retorted Tim with far more spirit than he usually displayed.

"Don't give me none o' that," warned the policeman. "You're one o' them gal-lipups that warms benches fer a livin'. Keep a-goin' now!"

Tim seemed on the point of making indignant protest, but he thought better of it. "I'm lookin' fer work," he mumbled.

"Then go look fer it!" ordered the policeman.

Tim shuffled meekly away, but the shuffle was largely a matter of habit. He did not feel as dispirited as he looked and acted.

"Me a bo!" he muttered. "Me with a twenty-dollar gold-piece in me pocket all the time! I come near showin' him

how much of a bo I am, only he'd have copped the shiner if I had. Him talkin' to me like that when I got more in me pocket than he has!"

Thus does the possession of wealth give spirit and confidence to us all.

In Tim's case, however, caution tempered his confidence at first and experience broke it afterward. For Tim decided to indulge in a few appetizers and then to partake of such a meal as he had not had in years, and he failed to get either.

His idea of an appetizer was not one that would commend itself to the idle rich or others who think they live well. No cocktail would satisfy his fastidious palate or even make a sufficient impression upon his hardened throat to let him know that it was going down. His desire, as a preliminary to his repast, was for about six glasses of the liquid fire that passes for whisky with those who are copper-lined, and he made his way at once to a place where it was to be had. But, as before stated, he did not get it. The bartender was a suspicious mortal, and, besides, he had had dealings with Tim before.

"Flash the coin!" he ordered.

"Oh, I got it," asserted Tim.

"P'raps yuh have," retorted the bartender, "but yuh got to show me."

Reluctantly Tim fished the gold coin from his pocket and held it up.

"Where'd yuh get it?" demanded the bartender as soon as he had recovered from the shock.

"Me fairy godfather give it to me," replied Tim in lightsome mood.

Humor was wasted on the bartender, however. "None o' that josh business!" he retorted. "You frisked somebody fer that or else stuck up a drunk. I'll give yuh five fer it."

Tim hastily restored the coin to his pocket and shuffled toward the door, sadly realizing that he should have expected something of this sort.

"Come back here!" ordered the bartender.

Force of habit compelled Tim to so far obey this order as to stop, but he resolutely refrained from putting himself within reach of the bartender's long arms. The latter leaned over the bar and

made a few significant, not to say threatening, remarks.

"Somebody's lookin' fer that yellow boy right now," he said. "You can't do nothin' with it without tippin' it off to the bulls that you're the man that done the trick, an' then it's the blue wagon fer yours. I'll give you five in coin yuh can use fer it or I'll tip yuh off to the police myself."

He was too avaricious. If he had offered ten dollars, Tim might have succumbed to the combined argument and threat, knowing that the mere possession of such a coin made him an object of suspicion, but the discount was too heavy. He beat the bartender to the door by a scant six feet.

"They don't give a bo no chance," he complained. "The bulls 'ud lock me up jest fer havin' it, an' ever'body else wants to shake me down fer the big end. I aint done nothin' but find a gold-piece, but they'd have me lookin' from the inside out anyhow."

After brief reflection, Tim decided to eat first and get his appetizers afterward. He might have less trouble with the coin in a restaurant than in a saloon.

The restaurant he chose was a small and unpretentious one, but the meal he ordered was big. That aroused the proprietor's suspicions at once. When a man of Tim's general appearance orders pretty much everything on the bill-of-fare, it is a fair presumption that he is broke and desperate and willing to take a beating, if necessary, in exchange for a square meal.

The proprietor journeyed to Tim's table.

"Goin' it pretty strong?" he remarked.

"Oh, I got the coin," retorted Tim.

"Let's see it!" said the proprietor.

"Oh, I got it," insisted Tim.

"That's what the last gink said that done the bill-o'-fare through and repeat," returned the proprietor, "and the only satisfaction I got out of him was to chase him a block and give him a ride in the hurry-wagon. The one before that took two bad eyes and a broken nose away with him, but it didn't put any money in the cash-drawer. You don't look like you'd been earning much."

"I aint," admitted Tim, "but I got a

fairy godfather, like you read about in books, that passes me the coin."

"Well," declared the proprietor, who was not to be turned from his purpose by airy persiflage, "I got to see what he passed you the last time or you don't eat here."

Tim made sure that his line of retreat was open, in case hasty retreat proved necessary, and then displayed the twenty-dollar gold-piece.

"Where'd you get it?" demanded the proprietor.

One explanation was as good as another, so far as Tim was concerned, for no one would believe that he came by it honestly anyway, so he again gave credit to his fairy godfather, that humorous idea having taken possession of a mind that seldom evolved anything at all and had room for no more than one thing at a time.

"Well," said the proprietor, "I can't change it."

"Oh, that's all right," Tim assured him. "I'll hand you the eats money when I come in again."

"No, you wont," retorted the proprietor promptly. "I'll just send out and get it changed while you're eating."

"Nix, not," responded Tim with equal promptness. "I don't let go o' this till I see the change stacked up in front o' me. I near lost it once a'ready."

"Oh, you did!" exclaimed the proprietor. "Well, the way you act don't make a hit with me, and you don't eat here on any bluff. Pass it over or out you go!"

"I'll git it split up myself," agreed Tim, rising hastily.

"Ask a policeman," advised the proprietor scornfully. "He'll likely know where it come from. I don't know but I ought to call up the station anyhow and see what cripple's been held up."

Tim did not stop to resent this gross insult. He seldom stopped to resent anything, having long since fallen out of the habit. Besides, to pause might put that precious coin in jeopardy. So he kept going until he again found himself on the park bench that he had recently left.

"A bo don't git no chance," he grumbled, "even when he's got what he come by square!"

Not a very lucid explanation of his trouble, but sufficiently clear to himself.

It was a sad and serious problem! He had money, and he could not eat! He had money, and he could not drink, which was far more heartrending! How could he get that coin changed without being himself robbed of the greater part of it or arrested because of the suspicion that the mere possession of it engendered?

He was so deep in this problem that he failed to note the approach of Officer Casey, the policeman who had previously ordered him away.

"Back, are yuh?" exclaimed Casey. "Got some idee that yuh rent this bench be the year, have yuh? Well, it's a ride fer yours, this time."

And Officer Casey rang for the wagon.

At the station the desk sergeant asked the charge.

"Vagrancy—sent in by Casey," explained the wagon man.

"Lemme go!" pleaded Tim. "I aint done a thing."

"That's just the trouble," returned the sergeant. "Search him, Jim!"

The amazement of Jim and the sergeant and the others present when the twenty-dollar gold-piece was disclosed was almost overwhelming. One would as soon expect to find a pearl in a muck-heap.

"Where'd you get that?" demanded the sergeant.

Tim, discouraged, saw no reason for changing his story.

"Me fairy godfather passed it to me," he answered.

"You stole it!" accused the sergeant.

Tim shook his head. "I aint stole a thing," he declared. "It's mine, an' you aint any right to take it away from me."

"Where'd you get it?" demanded the sergeant again.

"Me fairy godfather give it to me," maintained Tim doggedly.

"We'll likely hear of somebody held up or touched," decided the sergeant. "Lock him up!"

"Fer what?" asked Tim.

"Vagrancy," replied the sergeant.

"An' me with twenty bucks in me kick!" exclaimed Tim.

The sergeant's brow clouded. A man



"There's a mystery here," said the girl. "There's a hatful of hot-air," retorted the sergeant.

possessed of twenty dollars did not come under the legal definition of a vagrant.

"It's disorderly conduct," he decided autocratically. "Any hobo with twenty dollars is disorderly or going to be. Lock him up. We've got to hold him until we know more about this."

And from that decision there was no appeal.

II

Lucas Kirkham, lawyer, was summoned to Platt street police station to see a client, there being excellent reasons why the client could not call upon him. All lawyers practicing in the criminal courts occasionally find it necessary to go to their clients instead of having their clients come to them.

Having finished his conference with the young man in trouble, Kirkham was leaving the cell-room when a dilapidated derelict in one of the other cells called to him. Kirkham hesitated, but in criminal practice you never can tell when or where you are going to come upon an interesting case, and interesting cases appealed to Kirkham.

"Say, boss," complained the derelict, "they're

goin' to put one over on me."

"What have you done?"

"Nothin'," replied the derelict, "only pick up a big yellow boy."

"Oh, they can't do anything with you for that," assured Kirkham.

"Can't, eh?" retorted the derelict,

otherwise Tim. "Look what they done to me a'ready. An' there's a chromo says I pinched it from her."

"Didn't you?"

"Nix, not," asserted Tim emphatically. "Never see her before. If I'd a'done it, I'd take what's comin' to me an' never bleat, but I don't want to go up fer what I never done."

"Naturally," returned Kirkham.

"An' that aint the worst of it, either," Tim went on dolefully. "The chromo says I'm an interestin' sickological specimen, an' she's comin' back to study an' convert me. It aint fair. Even if I'd stole the coin they aint got any right to treat me like that."

Kirkham laughed. "That is rather hard," he admitted. "But how did they happen to suspect you?"

"They didn't," replied Tim. "Jest pinched me fer a vag, found the gold boy on me, an' put the kibosh on me fer luck. Then the chromo complains she's had the yellow boy took from her in a crowd, an' she says I look like the man that bumped her."

"Did you tell them where you found it?" asked Kirkham.

"Nix, not," answered Tim. "What's the use? I told 'em me fairy godfather give it to me."

"Your what?" exclaimed Kirkham.

"Me fairy godfather," repeated Tim.

"You told them that?"

"Sure. Why not? Aint it as good a story as any?"

"Better," declared Kirkham. "Much better. It's so good that it interests me. Give me all the details, and I'll see what I can do for you."

Kirkham stood at the cell door in conference with Tim for some time. Once or twice he laughed, and, toward the conclusion of their interview, he did a good deal of talking himself, but in the end he shook his head vigorously. "Don't want the case!" he declared. "Wont touch it."

"Oh, now, boss," pleaded Tim, "don't throw a bloke down like that!"

"Haven't time to bother with it!" insisted Kirkham, and he turned away, wherat the lock-up man, watching and listening, smiled grimly.

Tim retired to the bench in his cell,

and there he sat, in gloomy reverie, when Miss Annette Doolittle arrived.

Miss Doolittle, it may be explained here, was quite honest in her accusation, but, as a matter of fact, nothing had been stolen from her. True, she had had a twenty dollar gold-piece in the little inside pocket of her shopping-bag, and she had been subjected to much jostling in a crowd, after which she found the bag open and the coin gone; but the coin had been lost before she got into the crowd.

She had rested earlier upon the same bench that had been later occupied by Tim. Resting there, she had taken her handkerchief from the bag, and the coin, having slipped out of the pocket, came with it. Falling upon the grass, it made no sound and was unnoticed until Tim came along. Miss Doolittle, however, was quite sure she had been robbed, and was equally sure that Tim looked very much like a man who had jostled her in the crowd.

"My poor man," she said, "why wont you unburden your soul and tell the whole story? I'm sure the judge will be lenient with you if you do. Indeed, I'll ask it myself."

"Me!" exclaimed Tim. "Why, I told all I know a'ready."

"You haven't confessed," she reproached him.

"Sure I have," he returned. "I confessed that me fairy godfather passed up the gilt to me."

Miss Doolittle had not yet heard this explanation, and she was naturally surprised. "Do you mean to say that you didn't steal that money from me?" she demanded.

"Surest thing you know," replied Tim. "And that somebody gave it to you?"

"You're on."

"I'm what?"

"You're right."

"But who would give you twenty dollars in gold?" she persisted.

"Me fairy godfather," answered Tim.

"Don't jest, you benighted man!" cautioned Miss Doolittle. "I want to help you."

"An' I'm givin' it to you straight," returned Tim. "I don't know no more than what I tell you, but you can tie up

to that. If you think it's a stall, go down to Dan Hogan's saloon an' ask Big Ed, the barkeep, if I didn't tell him about me fairy godfather passin' out the cush."

Miss Doolittle gasped. "Go to a saloon!" she exclaimed.

"Sure," said Tim. "Slip into the wine-room through the side door."

In all her forty years of life, during the last ten of which she had been interesting herself in the reformation of man, Miss Doolittle never had had such a scandalous suggestion made to her, and her face showed it.

"Oh, well," conceded Tim, seeing this, "if you're leery o' that, see the main stem at the Bonanza hash-house, an' he'll tell you the same thing. They both know 'bout me gittin' money from me fairy godfather."

"Let me understand this," faltered the perturbed Miss Doolittle in an effort to reach the heart of a matter that was rendered the more bewildering to her by Tim's slang expressions. "Do you mean to tell me seriously that a man you don't know has been giving you money surreptitiously?"

"Nix, not," replied Tim. "I wouldn't say he done it that way, but he's been passin' it out to me on the quiet."

"That's what I mean," explained Miss Doolittle. "It's the most marvelous thing I ever heard of—almost unbelievable. And you haven't a suspicion—not an idea—who it is?"

"Oh, I got an idee," admitted Tim, "but it aint safe to bank on."

"Who do you think it is?" asked Miss Doolittle eagerly.

"Me illegitimate father," replied Tim.

"Why—why—"

But Miss Doolittle found herself floundering in a sea of bewilderment and doubt and turned quickly to other phases of the subject.

"Does he do this often?" she asked.

"Only when I'm down to iron an' grass."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Sleepin' on a park bench an' feedin' from the lawn," explained Tim.

"Oh, you poor man!" exclaimed Miss Doolittle commiseratingly. "Do you really get down to that?"

"Sometimes," said Tim.

"And how does he know?" she persisted.

"Search me!" answered Tim; "but he does. That's what makes him me fairy godfather, aint it?"

"Why, it's *almost* like a fairy story," admitted Miss Doolittle. "I never heard anything like it. But why doesn't he give you some real help—get you some new clothes and a good job—rehabilitate you?"

"Re-what?" queried Tim.

"Give you a fresh start in life, I mean."

"He prob'ly don't trust me," explained Tim. "I been on the rattler too long."

"On the what?"

"Under the bench—in the wallow—down an' out."

"Oh!"

"He don't think I could make good. He only comes to a showdown when I'm up ag'in' the last peg, an' then it's mostly only a little shiner—a five—that he gives me. He was prob'ly out o' change this time an' had to pass the big one."

"I think I understand," said Miss Doolittle. "He wont see you starye, but he thinks you incapable of reform."

"That's the rifle," returned Tim.

"I don't believe any man is incapable of reform," she declared earnestly, "if he is given the right encouragement and the right kind of an opportunity. But," she added, doubt assailing her, "why doesn't he come to your assistance now? You never were in greater need of a friend."

"He couldn't do nothin' without uncoverin'," explained Tim, "an' he's showed plain he wants to keep in the dark. He knows, but he can't do nothin' while I'm here. He'll come to the front all right when he gits the chance. You stand fer me with the bulls, an' I'll show you I got a fairy godfather."

"You will!" she exclaimed, much excited. "Oh, I wish you would! Your story is so romantic, you know, that—that I can hardly believe it in this prosaic age."

"I'll prove it," insisted Tim. "I'll show you how the gilt falls into me kick, if you git me loose from here."

Mebbe I can't do it right off the reel, but you tie up to me fer a few days an' you'll see this aint no stall."

Miss Doolittle knew what he meant, even if she did find many of his expressions unintelligible, but there came to her, in spite of her sympathetic interest, a flash of caution. Telling him that she would see what she could do, she went to the sergeant and asked that some one be sent to Dan Hogan's saloon to question Big Ed, the bartender, about the fairy godfather. The amazed sergeant scoffed, but she was insistent.

"There's a mystery here," she de-

said he got it from his fairy godfather," he reported, "but he's only done it once."

"That's enough!" decided Miss Doolittle. "I'm going to bail him out and go with him and see what I can learn about this mysterious godfather."

In vain the sergeant argued that Tim was merely a natural-born liar, artificially developed. Miss Doolittle was determined, and if she chose to furnish bail she was privileged to do so.

"He'll give you the slip," argued the sergeant, "and you'll be caught for the bail."

"I don't believe it!" returned Miss



He settled himself comfortably on the bench and waited.

clared, "and we must go to the bottom of it."

"There's a hatful of hot air!" retorted the sergeant disgustedly. "He tried to work that gag on us."

"Did he?" she exclaimed. "Then there must be something to it. He wouldn't try to fool the police, of course. So you really must send some one. I'd never forgive myself if I didn't do everything possible now to clear up the mystery."

And the sergeant sent a man to Hogan's and the Bonanza restaurant.

The man returned, looking troubled. "He's showed coin in both places and

Doolittle with the emphasis of conviction. "He told the truth about Hogan, didn't he? And the Bonanza restaurant? And he told you about the fairy godfather, too! Why, it proves there's something to his story."

The sergeant sighed, but he had long before learned the futility of arguing with a sympathetic and interested woman.

Miss Doolittle, in spite of her sympathy and interest, did not sally forth with Tim when he was released, however. She was far from proud, but she preferred to follow a short distance behind, even at the risk of losing him. A

plain clothes man, detailed by the sergeant, also followed. The sergeant was both curious and cautious.

"I aint promisin' nothin' first throw out o' the box," explained Tim before starting out, "but he likely knows a'ready the trouble I'm in, so I'm hopin' fer quick action. You jest stick to me an' I'll show you before we git through, anyhow."

To the surprise of the plain clothes man, he made no effort to lose himself in the crowd, but led the way to the bench in the little park where he had found the twenty-dollar coin. Then he settled himself comfortably on the bench and waited. Miss Doolittle seated herself a little distance away, while the plain clothes man hovered near. Across the street from the park were several large office buildings, and Tim's eyes occasionally roamed from window to window of these. On one of the windows was the name "Lucas Kirkham," but no one noticed that.

About twenty minutes later the procession moved again—Tim first, Miss Doolittle following, and the plain clothes man close behind her. The plain clothes man, it may be admitted, felt like a fool in all this silly maneuvering, but Miss Doolittle was intensely interested and excited.

Tim wandered, apparently aimlessly, through various streets, and finally brought up at the bench again. This time he tipped the bench back a little and took from under one of the front legs a five-dollar gold-piece. Miss Doolittle gasped, and the plain clothes man rubbed his eyes.

"It aint any wonder," reflected the plain clothes man, "that Casey has trouble with the bo comin' back to that bench all the time. I'd be doin' it myself if I could pick up the coin that way."

Tim slipped the gold-piece into a pocket and led the way back to the police station.

"It's the most wonderful thing I ever heard of!" cried Miss Doolittle, as soon as they were in the station, where she could speak to him without attracting unpleasant notice. "It's like a fairy story! Why, it's all true, just as he said."

The sergeant looked at the plain

clothes man inquiringly. "Somebody planted a coin for him, all right," admitted the latter.

"Sure!" said Tim, and he produced it.

"Who?" asked the sergeant.

"Me fairy godfather," answered Tim.

"Rats!" ejaculated the sergeant.

"Don't scoff, Sergeant!" reproved Miss Doolittle. "Who else could have done it? Do you suppose he has any friends who could do it, even if they knew he was going to be there?"

"No," admitted the sergeant.

"And has he had any chance to get word to his friends, even if they could do it?" persisted Miss Doolittle.

The sergeant reflected. "No," he conceded. "He hasn't seen anybody but a lawyer who wouldn't take his case."

"Then that settles it!" declared Miss Doolittle. "He was telling the truth, and I can't get over such a wonderful and romantic thing happening in this great, prosaic, modern city! Do you always get the money that way?" she asked, turning to Tim.

"Nix," answered Tim. "Some guy 'd git onto it an' be coppin' the coin. Sometimes a kid comes from one o' them buildin's on the other side o' the street an' hands it to me, an' once somebody passed it out from a taxi. But it's al'ays in the park that I git it. That's what gives me the idee that me fairy godfather has a office in one o' them buildin's on the other side o' the street, but I dassent go nosin' round or he'd quit passin' out the coin."

"Sergeant," said Miss Doolittle decidedly, "I wont prosecute this poor fellow, and you can't make a vagrant out of a man with twenty-five dollars and a fairy godfather, so you'd better let him go."

The sergeant sighed. "What fools these women be!" he grumbled. But what could he do?

Kirkham looked at Tim in some surprise. "I rather expected you'd skip with the five," he said.

"Nix, not," returned Tim emphatically. "I never t'row down a guy what treats me white. I got the big one left, anyhow."

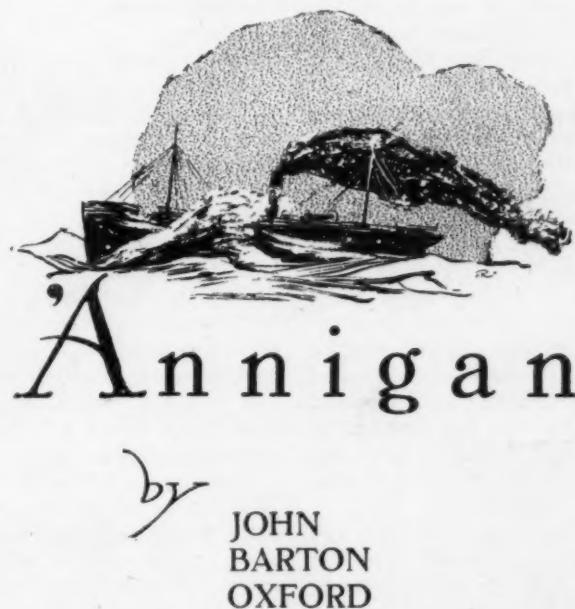
"Yes," said Kirkham, "of course.

That'll be just about the amount of my fee."

Tim's jaw fell. He had expected some recognition of his honesty in returning the five-dollar gold-piece, if only a lessening of the lawyer's charge, and, instead, he was called upon to give up all he had. But he handed Kirkham the big coin without a word. Lawyers were robbers, anyhow, he reflected.

"It is a theory of mine," Kirkham went on, "that no man can be respectable

unless he feels respectable, and no man can feel respectable in dirt and rags. I don't know whether there's anything in you—I presume not—but I'm going to add my five to the twenty and find out." He called in a clerk. "John," he said to the clerk, "this is Tim Carney, and here is twenty-five dollars. Fit Tim out in some cheap but decent clothes, get him a bath, a hair-cut and something to eat, give him what money there is left, and bring him back here."



IT had been a vicious blow—even for Hatteras. For three days the northeaster had whistled and howled and roared, piling up a mountainous sea. Then the flying scud in the heavens had thinned and broken; the wind had hauled into the northwest—cold, raw, biting to the very marrow of the bones and bringing with it flailing squalls of snow.

Through the wicked cross sea that came with the backing in of the wind, the old tramp steamer *Shannon Castle* rolled and wheezed and wallowed, her decks swept clean, and her chief engineer cursing the sea which wrenched her clanking old engines until they bade fair

to fall into shapeless junk-heaps.

Moreover, as she wallowed along, burying her nose in the green hissing seas at the slightest provocation, the *Shannon Castle* had a decided list to port, which told—even if the crashing sounds below some hours since had not done so to everyone within earshot—that her cargo had shifted in the buffeting she had taken in the recent blow.

Therefore, the moment the wind had subsided somewhat, and the falling sea made the deck a livable place, the skipper summoned his second officer, Mr. Faulkner, and bade him go below and retrim the cargo.

Faulkner called the men of his own

watch, borrowed some of the first officer's, and descended into the gloom of the hold by way of the after hatch. Here he came upon a beautiful mess of bales and boxes, mixed in an indiscriminate heap against the ship's port side. So with sharp orders which were not without an intermixture of pungent oaths, he set the men to work. With an electric flash in his hands he poked forward to ascertain the exact amount of work to be done.

Stumbling along well up towards the peak, his electric flash darting hither and yon, Faulkner suddenly stopped short, uttered a low exclamation under his breath, and turned the light to the litter of cargo at his feet.

There, stowed snugly between two big packing cases, lay a man, sound asleep, with his head pillow'd on his arm. Beside him was a big paper bag, its grease-stained sides proclaiming the food within, and near by was a good sized jug of water.

That the man had been tossed about in the recent blow was evident from the long rents in the faded old rain coat he wore, as well as from the bruises and scratches on his face. But here, the hold being very narrow and the cargo more tightly wedged, the boxes and bales had not shifted as had been the case farther aft.

The sleeping man wore a suit of dingy brown, torn here and there where he had slid about on the rough packing-cases; beside him was a brown velours hat. His shoes were badly scratched and nearly worn through at the soles. His linen might have been clean when he entered the hold, but now it was very grimy. Of course a three-day's stubble of blue-black beard on his face did not in any way tend to improve his general appearance.

Faulkner poked the man vigorously with his foot.

"Come on, you. Wake up!" he growled.

The man stirred, sighed, hoisted himself blinkingly to an elbow and then sat up, whereat Faulkner caught him roughly by the collar of the tattered rain-coat and jerked him to his feet.

"Come out o' this, you dock-rat beat," he said, stepping aft and pushing his captive before him. "We'll go up and

find out what the old man'll have to say to the likes of you. He aint none too partial to stowaways, I can tell you now. Wot's your name?"

The man had been seized with a paroxysm of coughing; it seemed to shake his whole slender frame. Also his cheeks showed, either one, the hectic danger signal that is not good to see.

Faulkner gave the man an impatient shake. "Wot was that name? I didn't make it out," he said ironically.

The man pulled himself together. By an effort he held the cough in check for a moment.

"Hannigan'll do as well as any," he choked.

"'Annigan, eh? Well, come on with you, Mr. 'Annigan; up that ladder to the deck, and God help you when I tell the old man I found you stowed away in the for'ard hold!"

He boosted his captive up the short ladder to the after hatch, and so to the deck. Once on the deck in the full glare of the sunshine, which was now and then breaking through the clouds, the man gave a sharp little cry and clapped an arm over his eyes, unused, after his incarceration in the Stygian hold, to the glare of daylight.

Seen in the better light of the deck, Faulkner found his captive to be a tall, extremely emaciated man of perhaps thirty-five or so, with curling black hair, and a firm, thin-lipped mouth.

Half dragging, half pushing him, Faulkner forced him along the deck to the foot of the bridge.

"Oh, Cap'n!" he hailed, and the ruddy face of Captain Graydon looked down on the pair below him.

"Found this in the for'ard hold whilst I was looking about to see how much the cargo had shifted up towards the peak, sir," said the second officer, pointing to the sorry figure he still clutched by the coat collar.

The skipper's face darkened. "Another of those dirty dock-rats looking for a free trip to a warmer climate, I suppose," said he. "Well, findings is keepings, Mr. Faulkner. You may add him to your watch. Set him to work, polishing brass or anything, although polishing brass is probably all you'll find him good for.

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Only let him do something, and do it pretty much all the time. Let him know when we catch stowaways on this boat they earn their passage."

"Aye, aye, sir!" said Faulkner.

"One moment!" The skipper halted them as they were moving away. "What's his name?"

"'Annigan, he says."

"Anything to say for yourself, 'Annigan? I always give every man a hearing."

"Nothing," said the stowaway quietly.

"All right. Take him for'ard."

On the way forward they were met by Mr. Waite, the *Shannon Castle's* first officer, who was returning from a minute inspection of the bow for any damage the gale might have inflicted.

"What have you got there, Mr. Faulkner?" he asked.

"Another globe-trotter without funds," grinned Faulkner. "The brasses'll shine before we hit the lower coast. Skipper's turned him over to me."

Ten minutes later, his thin frame racked with the spasms of coughing, shivering in the bitter wind that swept over the weather rail, 'Annigan was feebly working a bit of cloth and a box of pasty stuff smelling villainously of banana-oil, as he strove to polish some of the verdigris off the brass hand-rail of the steps which led to the ship's bridge.

The velours hat was pulled low over his eyes; the collar of the tattered rain-coat was turned up about his neck, but what little protection so thin a garment offered against the biting, snow-laden blasts was as nothing. His teeth chattered; his hands shook so they could scarcely hold the box of brass-polish.

Once after a particularly violent spell of coughing the man sank weakly to the steps, but the second officer, who was standing by, his eyes upon him, yanked him roughly to his feet.

"No sojering here, you rat," he hissed. "You've made your own bed; now lie on it. If the trip's worth taking, it's worth doing a little work for. Now get to your polishing."

Old Ben Frisbee, the second engineer, coming on deck a moment later for a breath of air, heard the rasping cough

and stood in the engine-room gangway looking thoughtfully at the shivering figure by the bridge steps. Then he stepped forward.

"Stowed away?" he asked succinctly.

The other nodded.

"They're rare hard on the stowaways they catch on this boat—rare hard on 'em, lad."

Ben looked at the thin bare hands, blue with the biting cold. He reached into the hip pocket of his greasy overalls and pulled out a pair of heavy gloves.

"Put 'em on," he said simply.

The man nodded his thanks. He drew on the gloves and fell to work. But again the cough shook him, and this time he went to the rail and spat overside—spat redly, Ben noticed.

"'Tis no work for ye out here in the cold with nothin' more on yer skinny carcass," said Ben not unkindly. "I'll hae a word with Mr. Faulkner about ye."

Ben crossed the deck to the place where Faulkner stood.

"Yon's a seck mon," said Ben.

"Yah, they all are," said Faulkner with a wry face.

"He's just spit blood," said Ben.

"So can anyone that knows how to suck it from his gums. I know 'em. Stow your sympathy and keep it for them that deserve it. These yellow dock-rats are all alike. They'll work you any way they can to get a passage for nothing."

"He's a seck mon," Ben reiterated with conviction.

"Maybe he is, at that," said the first officer mildly as he came up to Faulkner's side. He had been watching the man by the bridge steps closely.

"Leave him to me," said Faulkner. "I'm not letting any water front bum like him tell up and down the lower coast how he worked *me* for an easy passage down."

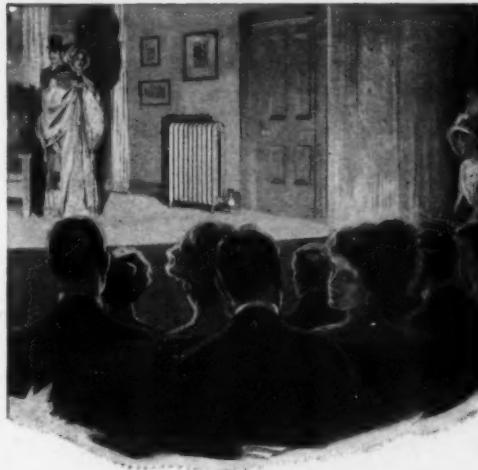
The first officer shrugged his shoulders and walked away. Ben went back to his clattering engines, but on the way he stopped once more by the shivering man in the torn rain-coat.

"I'm sorry, lad, but there's naught can be done. As I say, they're rare hard on the stowaways they catch on the old *Shannon Castle*."

The man glanced up gratefully. "I

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expected this," he said simply. "I've got to die soon anyway, so it doesn't make much difference. Only,"—his eyes grew narrow in their anxiety—"I can't die till I get down to Riaconda. I've got to keep alive somehow till we reach there!"

"You'll not die yet, lad," said Ben, but the look he cast at the other plainly told that the words were for effect merely.

"I sha'n't die till we get there; I can't," the other said sullenly, and went back to his polishing.

Down the coast went the rusty old tramp, and coughing, shivering, eternally at his polishing, 'Annigan counted the days that drew them each one nearer to Riaconda. They ran out of the biting winds into balmier weather, but 'Annigan's cough did not lessen, nor did his shivering cease. And always when the coughing was worst and his fingers came away from his lips red-stained and it seemed that the end was close at hand, he bit his lips and repeated to himself: "Not yet; not till I have seen them; not till I have told them what to do."

It was a beautiful night, with a velvet sky studded with myriad soft-burning stars, when the *Shannon Castle* rounded the lighthouse at Punta Guayra, shot across the bay and dropped her anchor in the harbor of San Felipe, Rioconda's one city worthy of the name. No sooner was the anchor down than 'Annigan had made his way to the first officer's side.

"We'll be reported to-night?" he asked anxiously. "They'll know ashore to-night that we're in?"

"Probably not," said the first officer. "This is a sleepy hole. They don't do things in a hurry here. If some of the loungers round the water-front happen to make us out and take the trouble to spread the news—"

"Would you set me ashore?"

"To-night?"

"At once."

"Oh, I imagine, to-morrow'll have to do," said the other. "We can't bother with a stowaway."

'Annigan made his way aft. He stood for a long time looking at the twinkling lights ashore. Then silently he slipped off his coat and his shoes.

A moment later Faulkner, coming on deck, heard a splash alongside.

"What was that?" he asked the first officer.

"The extra man in your watch," the latter said with a grin. "He's in an awful hurry to get to that dismal hole over there," he ended with a comprehensive sweep of his arms to the cluster of lights which was San Felipe.

Then out of the darkness came the chugging of a motor, and as they listened to it coming nearer, a small white launch shot alongside.

"Hallo!" a voice hailed them. "The *Shannon Castle*?"

"Right-o!" said the first officer. "Come aboard?"

"No. Just tell Colonel Cuyler we're waiting for him!"

"Colonel Cuyler?"

"Isn't he aboard you?"

"We haven't any passengers this trip," said the first officer.

There was a moment's buzz of excited conversation in the launch.

"He cabled us he'd come with you. Didn't he come down from New York?" the voice inquired again.

The first officer leaned over the rail. By the feeble light of a lantern in the boat he could make out the speaker and the men with him, all clad in the green and gold of the Riacondan army.

"I told you we hadn't any passengers," said the first officer wearily.

Again the buzz of conversation in the boat. The motor was started.

"Wait a minute below there!" cried Faulkner.

He turned to the man beside him. "I'm sick for a sight of shore," said he, "even such a hole as that is over there. I'm going down to ask the old man to let me go in. See that those fellows stand by with their launch. They can take me in."

He sped to the chart-room; in a moment he was back.

"Below in the launch! Set me ashore, will you?"

"But certainly! Come aboard!"

It was eleven o'clock when Faulkner came back to the *Shannon Castle*. He flipped a coin to the boatman who had brought him off, and swarmed aboard by

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way of a rope trailing from an outswung boom which the first officer had left for just this contingency.

He went at once to his stateroom, switched on the light, and, reaching into the locker beneath his berth, drew out a bottle of Scotch, a siphon of soda and a glass. He was pouring himself a stiff drink, when the first officer paused at the open stateroom door.

"Trying to take the taste of San Felipe out of your mouth?" he asked banteringly.

Faulkner turned. The first officer saw his face was white and set.

"Come in," he bade the first officer. "Sit down. Have one with me. No, it isn't the taste of San Felipe I'm trying to drown. It's something I saw ashore there—something I wish to God I hadn't," he ended almost plaintively.

"I went ashore with that crowd and then I poked up to that little café, the open-air one under the awnings, up in the square by the cathedral, you know," Faulkner said.

The first officer nodded.

"I was quite alone. I sat down at a little table behind a palm. The orchestra was playing—that awful orchestra they have up there. Pretty soon those chaps that were in the launch came in and sat down at the next table to me. I could see them through the palm, but they didn't notice me. They were talking rapidly in Spanish. You know I can understand the lingo. They were wondering why Cuyler hadn't come down on the *Shannon Castle*, as he'd cabled them he would without fail. They were all talking at once. They couldn't seem to make out why he'd failed them.

"I gathered the man they were talking about was that Englishman, Colonel Renwick Cuyler, the one that was head of the army here for so long, and that was driven out of the country a while back for criticising the rotten government and trying to start an insurrection to better things for the common people.

"And all at once I heard a great commotion on the other side of the café, and

then a cheer, and up jumps those men at the next table and cranes their necks, with their eyes bulging like they couldn't believe them. And I looked, too.

"And then those officers began to cheer like mad, and ran forward. And there, clutching one of the iron supports that hold up the awning over the café, and a man—such a man! He was dripping wet and his mouth was bloody, and I know he'd crawled all the way up from the water—I know it because his pants below the knees were caked with that sickly red mud that you only find in San Felipe streets.

"He was tottering and swaying when they got to him and led him back to that table next mine, and propped him in a chair.

"'I'm here!' he says. 'I told you when I left that I'd come when the time was ripe. I'm dying! I've been very ill. I was ill when I got your message and I had no funds. But I knew you needed me and so I came.'

"'Now show me your plans. Show me where the government troops are and what you've done so far with your own troops. If you have six thousand able men, as you said in the message, I'll show you how to win this campaign with one bold stroke. Hurry,' he says, swaying in his seat and all choked up. 'I think I'm dying now!'

"They spread the plans before him and held him up, and he was whispering to them what to do and pointing to the plans.

"And what do you think this Colonel Cuyler was, Waite? S'elp me God, it was 'Annigan'!"

The first officer leaned from his seat on the berth with shining eyes.

"The man who almost worked you for a passage down here, Faulkner?" he said coldly. "The yellow dock-rat that—"

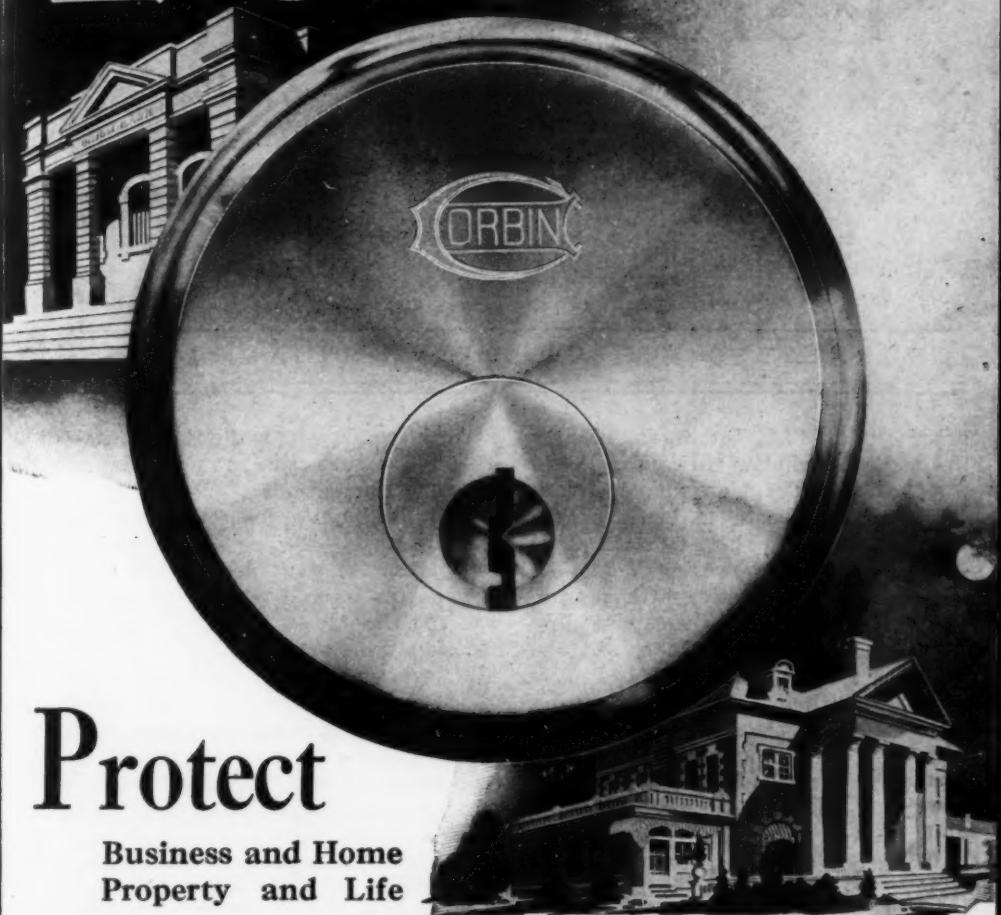
Faulkner turned himself another stiff slug of Scotch. He caught it up in a trembling hand and drank it, quite forgetting the soda.

"Oh, for Heaven's sake don't rub it in!" he snapped at the first officer.

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The Good-For-Nothing Person

by

ALMA
MARTIN
ESTABROOK



Author of "First Aid From A Beauty Shop," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

ALITTLE breeze flowed over the window sills and splashed into The Hare's Foot. It ran from booth to booth of the beauty shop, from shelf to shelf, from counter to counter, nosingly, like an impudent and inquisitive little stream, lapping here, purling there, chuckling a bit, then racing on. It caught the odors of stout white jars and slender-throated bottles, as the stream catches sprays of blossoms along its way, and whisked madly about, stirring up a perfect whirlwind of perfumes—orange flower and attar of roses and spicy fragrances of every sort—until you must have thought the spirits of all spring's flowers were holding high carnival in the fashionable grooming shop.

Leola, the girl at the telephone table, looked up from the day's appointments which she had been studying, and glanced across at Mary Grey, the temporary proprietress, busy behind her desk.

There were no customers in the beauty-parlors.

Leola smiled, with that unconscious consciousness which comes to a woman

when she speaks—no matter how casually—of the pre-eminent male figure against her horizon.

"I walked down town this morning with my friend—the one who is so stuck on Shakespeare, you know—and I wish to goodness I could remember what he was spouting about the day," she remarked musingly.

Mary Grey lifted her bright head and smiled understandingly, drawing a deep breath of the morning's freshness. Her glance passed the roofs and chimney tops visible through the open windows. A passionate longing for outdoors was in her fine, wholesome face.

"I got it!" triumphed Leola, screwing up her eyes till only her lashes were visible. "It was somethin' like this:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven.

"Great dope, aint it? Funny how them poet fellows sometimes gets a thing so pat. I don't know whether this was Shakespeare or Ella Wheeler Wilcox."

Mary Grey bent with suspicious suddenness over her big ledger.

Quiet filled The Hare's Foot—quiet

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except for the boom and roar of the street below, the whistles of far-off engines, the clang of gongs, the soft buzz of motors, the clatter of elevators in the big building itself, an occasional voice lifting itself out of the jumble of other voices which fell on the ear like the monotonous drone of bees.

Then the door opened and a fussy old dowager sailed in, and, without so much as a glance or nod at either Mary Grey or Leola, passed down the shop emitting the perfume of a violet bed.

"Humph, you can't make a lady by pourin' triple extract on-her, that's sure," observed Leola, looking after her. "Aint she the snob, though? They don't stop to think—that kind—that it's all an accident, them a-rustlin' in here so high and mighty, and us waitin' to serve 'em. An accident of a little more money, mebbe, or a little more education, or something of that kind, but, nine times out of ten, nothin' they can take any credit to themselves for. Know who she is? She's the Queen Bee of the Territorial Daughters. Looks old enough to be the godmother of the bunch, don't she? I'll bet she's seventy if she's a day. And all dolled up like that!"

"Look at that, will you!"—as the lady in question threw off her coat. "She's got on one of them silly Mason's aprons. They're the last word in style, you know. Oh, yes, the swellest things out. My lord, if she aint a sight in that tight black satin skirt with that fool apron thing fore and aft and them ear-rings ticklin' her shoulder blades. It's popcorn to Allegrettis she wears a *Juliet* cap at dinner."

"A what?" queried Mary Grey, lending only half an ear.

"*Juliet* head-dress in gold, trimmed with pearls!" And Leola leaned back and laughed softly, infectiously. When she blinked her shrewd little eyes at you and screwed up her impish face into just this ludicrous expression, you smiled with her whether you would or no.

Experience had taught Leola many of the vanities, the doldrums, the lean and fat vices, and the various motive springs of humanity. She recognized them on sight and tabulated them with almost professional accuracy.

"The old ones are the worst, aint they?" she observed. "Think of painting your lips over teeth that are ready to drop out of your head, and of penciling your eyes when they ought to look out from behind honest spectacles like your grandmother's used to do."

"There aren't many real grandmothers nowadays," remarked Mary Grey.

"You're right, there aint! Nor many real mothers either. There are just women. Women who are travelin' too fast to be bothered by having any little hands clingin' to 'em."

"You talk as if women had ceased to



"My son needs a shampoo."

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bear children," smiled Mary, still bending over her work.

"Oh, they bear 'em all right, *but they don't brood 'em.*" And Leola went back to her appointments.

At the moment the door of the beauty parlor opened and a man came in, leading a child. There was about the two of them the same untended, unmothered air. Not that either approached actual shabbiness, but that a missing button here and there, and a fray, and a rip just starting, proclaimed the fact that no one looked after them sartorially; while in their eyes—Irish blue eyes, they were, with thick black lashes—there was a look of longing, of loneliness, which made them almost of an age, the man and the boy.

"My son needs a shampoo," the man explained, as Mary Grey herself went forward to meet him. "I must leave him and get on to business. A tall, middle-aged woman with a scar at the corner of the mouth, a Mrs. Benson, will call for him. May I trust you to see that no one else takes him away?"

He was looking searchingly into the honest eyes bent upon him, and Mary Grey, divining only in part, and pitying, flashed her smile from him to the child.

"That you may!" she said heartily. "A Mrs. Benson—a scar at the corner of the mouth."

He hesitated, his hand dropping to the lad's shoulder and resting there. "It is most important," he said.

"You may trust me," said Mary Grey.

"Thank you," he said simply; "you are very kind. Good-by, Boy." His glance caressed the small figure. Then with a smile he departed, turning at the door to observe whether or not the boy were contented to remain without him. Mary Grey was leading the child down the room, his hand held close in hers.

"It was very careless of your father," she was saying. "He forgot to tell me your name."

"It is Boy," he replied.

"Boy? Isn't there anything more?" she smiled.

He smiled also, a grave, flashing, too-old smile.

"It's really Benjamin Tormey, Junior,

but nobody calls me that. They used to call me The Good-For-Nothing Person—just to tease, you know—but they don't any more. I don't know why. They just call me 'Boy.' Are you a Mamma?" he asked suddenly, looking up at her.

"A what, dear?" she exclaimed, the loveliest color in the world dying her cheeks.

"A mamma. You hold my hand like you was one. Mrs. Benson doesn't. She just grabs you and drags you along. What are all these things for?" he inquired, nodding toward the shelves with their pomades and their creams and their powders, and the glass cases with their offerings of Psyche Knots and Madonna Waves, of Flemish Braids and Fringe Bangs, of switches and toupees and wigs and transformations.

"They are to make people pretty," she said.

"Why are there so many of them?" he asked, bewilderedly.

"Because it takes them all, dear, and more," she laughed.

"Is this to drink?" he demanded, stopping before a tempting array of wine-red and emerald-green hair tonics.

"No, indeed. That's to make hair grow."

"Mine grows without it."

"I should think it did," she cried, running her fingers lightly through the shock of golden-brown locks.

"What's this?" His small hand went out toward a jolly little white jar with a picturesque label.

"Lily lotion. It—let's see what it does do,"—taking it up and turning it inspectingly. "Oh, yes, it removes redness."

"I ought to take it to Mrs. Benson's ash man then," he said gravely. "—To put on his nose. It's awful red. Is this candy, in this little box?"

"That's paste, dear."

"To eat?"

"Oh, no, indeed. To fill hollows. Here's Katie. She is going to wash your hair for you. Katie, are you waiting for a little boy who wants a shampoo?"

"Sure, and I am!" exclaimed Katie, her own Irish blue eyes lighting. "A little boy in a brown Russian suit, with yellow hair and red cheeks and eyes like



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a bluebird, eh? Come, hop up in this big chair and Katie'll get you ready."

He was very quiet while she busied herself in preparation. As she lifted him down for the shampoo, he said tentatively—



"Any boy wants his mother," Boy replied. "I guess, though, we'll have to manage without her."

ly, his wide eyes going round and round the part of the shop visible to him: "Most *everybody* wants to be pretty, I guess, from all these things you've got here. My mamma did, Mrs. Benson says. That's why she divorced Daddy and me."

immersed in the frothing suds there was silence except for wild sputterings and squeals of laughter and protest, and Katie's reassuring voice, but when The Good-For-Nothing Person was established in the big leather chair, his drip-

"Why she what?" cried Katie, almost dropping the bottle she was replacing.

He nodded matter-of-factly. "Oh, yes," he said, "Daddy and I are divorced. What makes you look like that? Wasn't you ever divorced?"

"No, darlin', I wasn't," exclaimed Katie.

He sighed. "I don't think you'd like it," he said simply.

"Bend your head to the bowl," she directed, sharply, seeing him through a mist.

While the handsome little head was

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ping head rising out of the whiteness with which he was enveloped, the water wiped from his eyes, his ears dried, and Katie's hands moving pleasantly at their task of drying his hair, his mind went back to that with which it was always puzzledly occupied.

"Of course, a man and a boy *are* a lot of trouble, I 'spose," he mused. "You don't get much time for anything else but them, if you are their mother. No time for going down street, I mean, and coming up here to make yourself pretty. And that's what my mamma liked to do, Mrs. Benson says. So she left Daddy and me, and we had to go and live with Mrs. Benson."

For a lump in the throat and a lively and consuming sense of desiring to lay violent hands on such a woman, Katie could say nothing.

"But I'm not the only boy that lives in a boarding house," he told her, brightening. "Danny Morris does, and Margaret Grose, and Tom Wasson. They're all divorced. Danny's father comes to see him on Sunday and brings him candy, but Danny don't like him, 'cause his mamma don't like him, you see. And Margaret's father comes to see her, too. It's in the contract."

"Oh, you little thing, you!" breathed Katie. "You poor little thing!"

"What did you say?" he inquired politely.

"I said do you like mints? I've got some right here in my bag. Open your mouth and I'll pop one in."

For a moment he was still, sucking away on the delectable sweet; then again the shrill little voice lifted:

"Frances Markley lives with her father and mother both!"

"Does she?"

"With them *bath*!" he repeated, as if

she had not grasped the full import of what he had said.

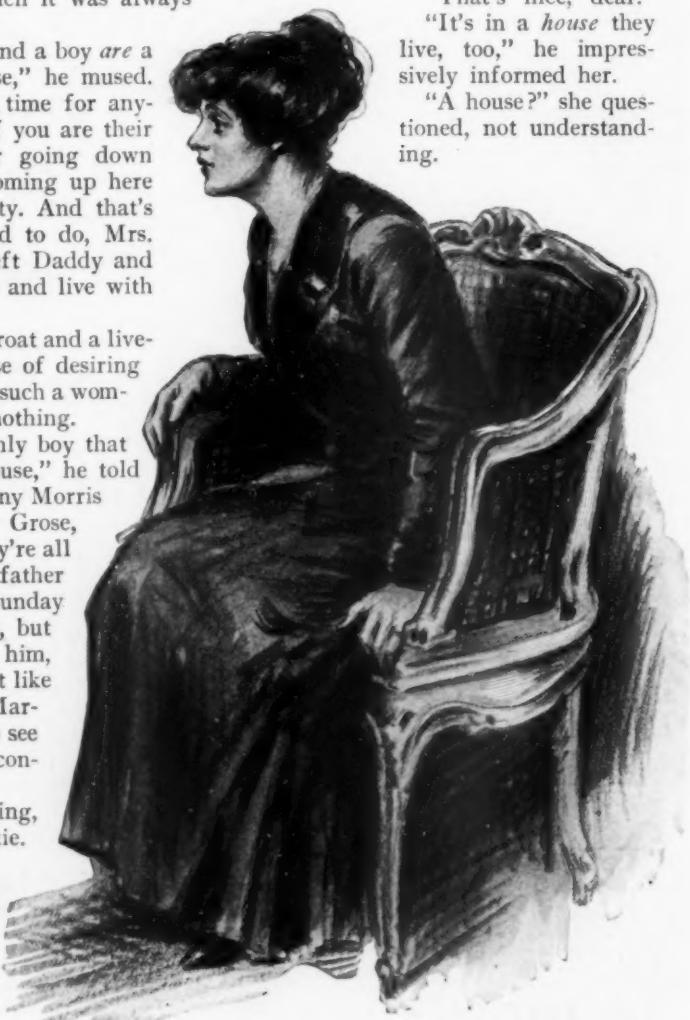
"Yes, darlin'."

"They've *always* lived together, and she says they're *always* going to."

"That's nice, dear."

"It's in a *house* they live, too," he impressively informed her.

"A house?" she questioned, not understanding.



The other woman sat forward, tense and white, her gaze fixing the child with hungry intentness.

"Not a flat, or a terrace, or an old apartment house. But a real for-sure house, with a yard and trees and things." He sighed. "My, it must be nice to live like that!"

Katie bent and rested her lips for an instant on the clean, fragrant brown



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hair. She did not speak, knowing nothing to say. When she lifted her head her merry Irish eyes were full of tears and she half turned away, fearing that the child might see them in the mirror. As she did so she became aware of a woman in a chair near by. She was a young woman, strikingly pretty, and built much as sculptors build their women of marble. Katie recognized her at once as one of the living models from a big department store. Only the day before she had seen her marching solemnly up and down in "Fashion's Parade," with a half dozen other models in bewitching creations, before a huge painted background supposed to represent Palm Beach.

She sat forward, tense and white, her gaze passing Katie and fixing the child with hungry intentness. And in a flash Katie read the whole piteous story: here was the mother for whom the boy longed, and fate, or destiny, or providence, call it what you would, had sent her here to overhear his plaintive little cry.

"So you want your mamma, do you, darlin'?" Katie stammered, affecting not to notice the other woman.

"Why, any boy wants his mother," he replied, with that heart-breaking gravity of his. "I guess, though, we'll have to manage without her, for Daddy don't think she'll ever come back to us. You see, Daddy don't make so very much money, though he does work awful hard. And it takes such a lot of it for women nowadays, Mrs. Benson says. But I wish my mother would try us just once more, Daddy and me; we'd do just everything we could to make her stay with us!"

The other woman broke quite down at that. She pushed away Marie, who was just beginning to take the pins from her heavy dark hair, and ran into the alcove and gathered the boy in her arms, half laughing, half sobbing, and entreating him to recognize her. She showered kisses on his hair and on his eyes, and on his little quivering lips. And Katie, wiping her own eyes frankly, drew the heavy curtains and shut them in together.

Outside she and Marie stood for an instant staring at each other in amazement; then they moved away, making a

pretense at work so that the attention of the parlors might not be attracted to the alcove.

They did not see Jane Dake, the wig-maker, sitting stiffly erect on her platform by a far-away corner window, her black eyes fixing the alcove and never leaving it for a second, her absurd blouse agitated by her quivering breath, her lips moving as if she talked with herself, speaking half aloud.

After a few minutes the woman emerged and hurriedly catching up her hat and the boy's, disappeared within again. Then she swept back the curtains on their rod and came out leading him. Beneath her hat of rose-red straw her dark eyes shone resolutely. Her face was wholly without color even in the lips, which set in a straight, hard line. She walked rapidly, looking neither to right nor left but down the long rooms to the door, and the child, dragging on her hand, lifted eyes clouded with anxiety, and kept saying earnestly, in that little high-lifted voice:

"You won't take me where Daddy can't find me, will you, Mother dear? I mustn't run away from Daddy, you know."

She stopped and catching him up with a savage gesture, was sweeping past the desk when Mary Grey arose suddenly in her path.

"You can't take him away," she said, very quietly. "I am his custodian for the morning."

"And I'm his mother!" cried the other woman. "Let me pass."

"His father trusted him to me," Mary Grey said gently. "I am going to keep the trust."

"You leave us talk, Miss Grey," Jane Dake's matter-of-fact voice said at her elbow. "We was neighbors once, Ethel Tormey and me. Come in here a minute, Ethel. Boy, you stay with Miss Grey. We won't be long."

Jane led the way to one of the catacombs and young Mrs. Tormey followed protestingly. The color was spotting in her cheeks and her eyes were half sullen, half defiant.

Once inside the apartment, the door closed, she turned fiercely on the little

Judge Harris Dickson, author of the famous "Old Reliable" series of stories and who, since February 13th 1909, has appeared in 33 issues of The Saturday Evening Post, begins a new series (his first since "Old Reliable") in the February issue of

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Alma Martin Estabrook and others.



"I'm his mother," cried the other woman; "let us pass."

old wig-maker: "What's the good of talking?" she cried. "He's mine, and I'm going to have him."

Jane Dake's eyes struck straight into the sullen ones. "I'm glad you want him, Ethel," she said quietly enough. "There are a lot of women who'd rather have rhinestone barettes in their hair any day than baby fingers. I thought you was one of 'em. I'm glad to find out you aint. But this is no way to get him. You see you're thinkin' only of yourself. You aint thinkin' of him at all."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the boy's mother, indignantly.

Jane Dake crossed to the one window of the tiny apartment and stood looking out on roofs and chimney tops. Her lean, dry face was as empty of expression as the wax model with the Psyche knot in the glass case outside the door.

"If you was to ask me what's workin' nine tenths of the mischief in the world to-day, I'd say it was the silly idea that's percolatin' everywhere about developin' self," she mused. "Self! Self! that's the cry. What do *I* want of life? What do *I* need? What shall *I* take? What shall *I* stand, and what sha'n't *I*? 'Taint what do *they* want—them that's dependin' on me, and lovin' me, and needin' me.

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What do *they* need, and what can *they* stand. Not a bit of it! A woman gets tired of a man, and does she stop to find out whether or not his children is tired of him, too? Not much. She just whisks them and herself out of his house and his life. You got tired of Ben. Tired of little Ben, too, I guess, Ethel. So you quit 'em. You didn't know whether they was tired of you, or not. You didn't care. You was thinkin' only of yourself. And now you're hungry for the boy—as you was bound to be, for you've got a good mother-heart in you, only it was buried for a while under a lot of silly longin' for frills and finery—and so you snatch him up, without askin' him what he wants to do about it, and you're for carryin' him off high-handed. That aint no way to do it. There's another way—a way that wont break his little heart."

"What way?" cried the girl, lifting her head defensively.

"Goin' back where you belong."

"To Ben?"

"To 'em both."

Silence filled the tiny room. A red-breast gentleman under the eaves twittered contentedly: his mate was busy with the nest tucked securely in a crevice.

"A little girl twelve years old killed herself last week because she couldn't decide between her father and her mother. 'Taint a decision God ever meant a poor little kiddy to make, Ethel."

Again silence, and the quivering breath of the girl-mother.

"You're young," the dry voice continued after a moment, a softened note in it. "You don't seem much more'n a baby to me yourself. And you aint had no mother to teach you what's worth while, and what aint. You thought willow plumes and messaline silk petticoats spelled happiness. But they don't, as many a poor deluded woman's found out—too late. Take all the silly creatures that're goin' mad nowadays in the pursuit of good-looks and youth, and what goes with 'em. The point is that *what goes with 'em aint half what they think it is.*"

The dryness, the sternness of her face broke up twinklingly, of a sudden.

"Don't you see, they're all on Fashion's Parade, the same as you was over at the store. Dolled up, and struttin' solemnly up and down beneath other folks' envious noses. There's no fun in it after a little. Is there, now? You've tried. Didn't you find out?"

"But a woman can't live on a pittance!" cried the girl.

"She can live on a pittance of money enough better'n she can live on a pittance of love," sternly declared the old voice. "You take the word of one that's tried."

The boy's young mother stood twisting her long chamois gloves. Tears were on the black lashes that swept her cheeks. Her lips quivered.

"And the monotony," she whispered. "A woman can't stand it like a man does. Ben never understood."

"Monotony!" snapped Jane Dake. "D'ye call bookkeeping hilarity? It aint exactly a circus nor a movin' picture show as I can see."

"You're against me! Everybody is against me, the court and everybody concerned!" the girl exclaimed, wildly, the dark eyes flashing through their tears.

"You're against yourself, Ethel. But it'll all come right. You'll see. Only you mustn't do anything to make matters worse. There, there, don't cry like that!"

But the flood gates had opened. The pretty rose-red straw hat had fallen to the floor and the dark head was buried in the back of the big leather chair, and the tears which had been so resolutely restrained for months, streamed in a torrent.

For an instant the little old wigmaker stood appalled by what she had brought about; then inspiration seized her, and tip-toeing out, she beckoned Katie.

"You call Ben Tormey, at Burk's Wholesale Grocery, and ask him to come here as fast as he can come. Tell him 'taint nothin' to do with the boy. That the boy's all right."

Then she tip-toed back again, and stood waiting.

The storm was over and young Mrs.

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Tormey had laved her eyes and powdered her nose and was pinning on her hat at the mirror when Katie knocked on the door.

At Katie's rap, Jane Dake slid out and closed the door after her, facing Ben Tormey, who awaited her, a thousand questions in his blue-black eyes, his grave young face wearing an expression of mingled anxiety and bewildered hope.

"She's in there," whispered the old wig-maker, "and she's yours, just exact-

ly as much as she ever was. Yours and little Ben's. You go in and claim her, and *keep her*."

"But does she want to see me?" he demanded incredulously. "Does she know—"

"She don't know anything except that she's half sick with worryin' and disappointment and longin'. She needs you and the boy as much as you need her. But she's young, and she's proud, and she's—a woman. Don't expect her to be too meek. Just take her." And she pushed him into the little room.

Then she went to find Boy.

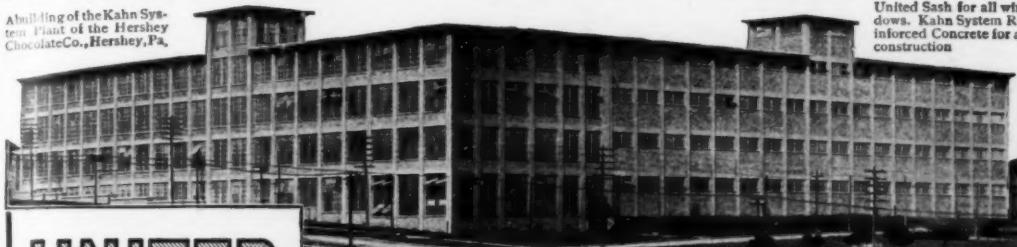
He was standing, sturdy feet widely planted, staring with big eyes at a fat woman who was taking a "facial." The fat woman was evidently fond of small



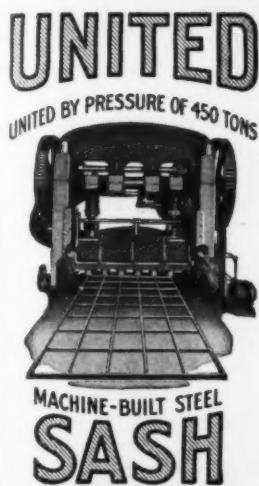
The flood gates had opened. The rose-red straw hat had fallen to the floor and the dark head was buried in the back of the chair.

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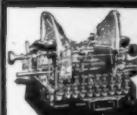


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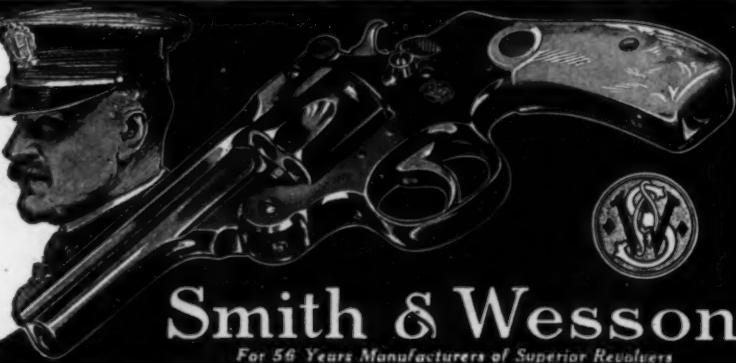
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boys, for she had held out a plump hand to him as he passed, detaining him. On her breast she wore a *cabochon* emerald that gleamed like the green light of a semaphore. Boy was gazing at it in fascination when Jane Dake came up and led him away.

"Is my mamma all right?" he asked, at once. He had not seen his father arrive.

"All right, my dear—at last," exclaimed Jane Dake, with a long sigh of relief. "Your father has come. He's in there with her. I want you to go in, too, and walk straight up to 'em, and say, 'Let's go home.'"

"But—but—aren't we divorced any more?" he cried, in wishful bewilderment that struck straight on her heart.

"No, you aint—that is, I don't think you're goin' to be."

"And we are to live together, my mamma and Daddy and I?"

Jane Dake blinked something back and nodded vehemently.

"The three of us *together?*" The eager, incredulous little voice breathed.

"Sure," said she, pushing him toward the door of the catacomb, "if you do as I say."

He hesitated. The wise, the wondering Irish blue eyes looked out of his serious little face with immense yearning. "Does it all depend on me?" he asked weakly.

"That's exactly what it does," said Jane Dake, blinking harder than ever. "But don't you be scared. You just walk straight in and say what I told you," and she opened the door and gave him a little push into the room.

Stiffly, because of a rheumatic pain which had begun to drill into her ankle bone, she went back to her platform and climbed up to work. With the odor of asphalt beneath the sun, there now came through the open windows a faint breath of flowers, borne from some far-away park bed, perhaps, and the little wig-maker sniffed it eagerly.

"Mm," she murmured, "smells like the good old summer time."

Mary Grey came over to her, standing with her back to the parlors. Her eyes were shining.

"Jane Dake," she said, with a lilt and a laugh and something much deeper in her tones, "I want to shake your hand for what you've done."

Their eyes met. They were both a bit high-pitched, a bit tremulous. Jane Dake smiled and looked down at her hand, then extended it dryly.

"I'll bet," said she, "you never shook a dirtier one. Them dyes is some of 'em fierce to rub off. My lord,"—looking over Mary Grey's shoulder, "there goes that Territorial woman, the one in the Mason's apron, you know. She's been here all morning."

"She is 'finished,' all right," murmured Mary Grey, glancing over her shoulder and shuddering a little.

"Takes herself for a Gaby Deslys. I wish Ethel Tormey could see her. She's as good an object lesson as you'll find in a day's travels."

Mary Grey turned, at the opening of the catacomb door. She caught her breath at the radiance of the faces of the three who emerged.

"I don't think young Mrs. Tormey needs any more lessons," she whispered. "Go down to the reception room. They'll want to see you." She waited a moment then she went back to her desk. As she passed the telephone table Leola was talking into the instrument, only her eyes and her up-to-the-minute coiffure showing above it. A very suspicious moisture was in the eyes.

"It's that kid," Leola defended. "His little face broke me all up. Happy! Say, d'ye ever see anything like it? I don't know when I've cried before. As my friend who is always quoting would say, 'Lawk, a massy on me! This is none of I!'" And Leola wiped her eyes frankly, and blew her nose, grinning a bit sheepishly.



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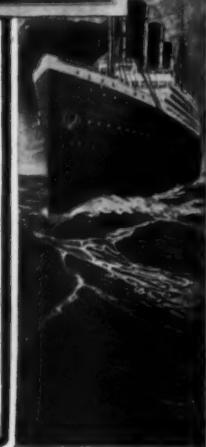
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The Blot on His 'Scutcheon

BY ARTHUR
BOLTONWOOD

NOODLES O'ROURKE straightened up from an inspection of the scale-beam, sighing softly, and slowly shaking his grizzled head.

"Somehow yer ar'ful slow comin' down wit' that weight, Brasher," he observed to the pink-skinned, supple-muscled young man who stepped off the scale-platform. "Eleven more pounds to come off av yer bechune now and the fifteent' av the month. I'm sorry, but it manes a longer grind wit' the road work. Yer'd better wrap up in two sweaters this mornin' and see'f that'll help anny."

"All right, Noodles," said the younger man. "You're the doctor. A little more road work wont hurt any, I imagine. Hey, Jake! Drop down a couple of sweat-ers out of my closet up there, will you?"

A pair of heavy sweaters came swishing over the bannister rail in the hall above and plumped at Brasher Devlin's feet. He picked them up and began pull-ing them on, while O'Rourke announced:

"Now l'ave me go out and get that old she-squaw av a motorcycle coughin' annywheres near reg'lar and we'll be off."

Presently from the little yard came the brisk *plut-plut-plut* of the motor, and Noodles' voice calling:

"All ready! She's workin' fine to-day, for a wonder. Come on, Brasher!"

Devlin stepped out to the porch of the little suburban cottage which had been rented as his training-quarters, and took a long, deep breath of the brisk September air. Then he ran lightly to the road,



and, with Noodles following him on the hissing motor-cycle, he struck into a long, easy stride, and went swinging down the road.

Blackwood was an ideal place for training. Close to the city, it was yet a very quiet and a very restful place to Brasher Devlin. Its trim houses, each with the well-kept bit of lawn and the big elms arching over it, suggested comfort and culture. Beyond the town lay a stretch of rolling country, given over for the most part to prosperous truck farms. Here the roads were excellent, and yet there were enough grades to be encountered to make the road-work part of the training all that could be desired.

Noodles, who was a firm believer in making the monotony of road-work as bearable as possible, had soon ranged the motorcycle alongside his trotting charge and was chattering away briskly.

It didn't matter so much what he said, he realized—anything to take Brasher's mind off those gruelling miles before him would answer.

"Brasher," quoth O'Rourke, in the course of this one-sided conversation, "do yer mind the little blonde queen up to the big white house a mile or so ahead—the wan you shinnied up the tree and got the Angora kitten for, after it had been driv there be the dog next door and wouldn't come down, that first mornin' yer was out doin' yer road-work?"

Brasher, his running shoes hitting the gravel at rhythmic, never-varying intervals, nodded with sudden interest.

"Yer mind, after yer'd hauled down

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the kitten and give it to her, and she'd thanked yer real sweet and pretty, and we was poundin' along the road again, how yer said to me she looked sorter sad—sadder'n what a pretty little peach like her had oughter be lookin'."

Again Brasher, without speaking, bobbed an affirmative nod.

"Well," said Noodles, pulling the motorcycle a bit closer, "I've heard what it is that makes her look that sad. That's Judge Manning's place—that big white house where we saw her first and have seen her sittin' on the porch every day since when we go by. She's the old Judge's daughter.

"High old muck-a-muck, the Judge is, round these parts; and so of course his daughter had to go and marry blooded stock—see? Yep, about a year ago—a young feller named Wilbur. Lawyer in the city, he is. Piles of money and all that sort of thing. But him and little Em'ly, or whatever her name is, never got on wort' a cent. They fit and quarreled somethin' fierce—see? Till bimeby, little Em'ly passes him wan about goin' back to Pa and Ma, and he for once sides in wit' her, and tells her to go and to the devil wit' her, or gentle words to that effect. And piff! Love's young dream is all over and done wit'; and she hikes home to Pa; and the swell big place they went and rented out here is shut up, and Wilbur, he goes stormin' off in to town and takes up his residence at a hotel; and it's all off, and an I-don't-never-want-to-lay-eyes-on-her-again atmosphere hoverin' round the both av 'em."

"Uh-huh!" Brasher Devlin (and Brasher Devlin, by the way, was merely his ring name) grunted as he padded along.

Noodles was silent for a moment. Then he leaned over his handle bars towards the running Brasher and chuckled.

"That aint all," he said. "Yer know how yer've always nodded to her every morning we've went past since that day yer brought down the Angora kitten outer the tree; and how she always smiles and nods and maybe waves the embroidery she's doin' at us? Well, wotta yer think? Some silly-minded old hen-gossip that's seen her do it has begun to

cackle. Yep, that's wot! I heard down-street the other day that Brasher Devlin wa'n't wholly ill-favored in the eyes of Judge Manning's daughter. Fact! Why, I even heard that yer was up there callin', sittin' on the porch wit' her last Thursday evenin'! Wotta yer know about that!"

Brasher Devlin stopped running. He stopped so suddenly that to avoid colliding with him, O'Rourke had to hop hastily off the motorcycle, and in so doing had considerable difficulty in keeping out of the wayside ditch into which the motorcycle seemed bound to flounder.

"Say," said Brasher very quietly, "they'd better tie a can to that line of talk. A woman like her wouldn't stoop to speak to a man that makes his living in the ring, except to be decently civil to him because he'd done her some trifling service, such as pulling her Angora kitten out of an elm tree, for instance. And as for last Thursday night, you know well enough, if you care to remember it, that I was hanging round the quarters all the evening and went to bed before nine!"

"Whoa there! Slow up! Don't go to gittin' so darned hot under the collar! You act like I'd started these yarns," O'Rourke complained. "I know yer was round all Thursday evenin' and that yer went to bed at—"

"Did you tell that to whoever it was told you these silly stories you've just been repeating?"

"Sure I did," said Noodles hastily. To be sure, he hadn't told them any such thing, but it seemed wise at the moment to say he had, at any rate.

"All right!" said Brasher rather shortly, and resumed his running.

Noodles, trailing after on the motorcycle, which he had only managed to start again with much difficulty, looked thoughtfully and speculatively at the younger man out of narrowed eyes, and took to shaking his head slowly, as if the whole import of the matter were somewhat beyond him, and as if, too, he were not without certain well-defined suspicions.

Presently they were passing the Judge Manning place. It was a huge, square house, set well back on tree-shaded, well-

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kept lawns. On the front porch young Mrs. Wilbur sat in a low rocker, embroidering a bit of white linen stretched in a little circular frame. She glanced up quickly as she caught those two well-known sounds—the pad-pad of Brasher's running feet and the sputtering *plut-plut-plut* of Noodles' motorcycle.

Brasher's hand touched his forehead and his head was inclined in his regular morning salute; Noodles lifted his old cloth cap from his gray head.

Mrs. Wilbur, smiling prettily, nodded to the pair and waved her embroidery-frame. Then they were past, and toiling up the grade just beyond the house.

Halfway up that grade Brasher Devlin stopped running again.

"Her husband must have been a consummate fool!" he observed with sudden irrelevance.

"Aw, gee, I dunno," Noodles objected, running the motorcycle about in little circles in the wide road, because he feared its all too well-known vagaries should he stop it. "I dunno. Yer can't never tell about women from their looks. Maybe now she was jest plain hell and all to git along wit'. Maybe she had the devil's own temper herself. She's not wit'out spirit. Anyone wit' half an eye could see that. But come on, Brasher! Wot in time are we loafin' here like this for. Git a move on. If ye're goin' to put Wild Kid Shannon out the fifteent' and cop the lightweight champeenship of the world, yer'd better spend yer time thinkin' how ye're goin' to git that eleven pounds off'n yer carcass, ruther than whether Mrs. Wilbur's hubby was a angel or a devil. Come on, now. Step it out! Yer aint hit a real decent pace this mornin'!"

Gossip is surely an invention of the devil. Like certain insidious bacteria, if undisturbed, it propagates itself, grows, flourishes, waxes great and becomes a positive menace before anyone can account for its coming into being.

Now the gossip Noodles O'Rourke had heard in Blackwood grew in this very manner. By the time it had reached the ears of the unhappy Edward Wilbur, mooning out a very unsatisfactory existence at a particularly luxurious hotel,

it had reached a decidedly menacing stage. That Mrs. Edward Wilbur, at her father's home in Blackwood, was behaving—well, to say the least—most indiscreetly towards a certain well-known and very handsome young light of the pugilistic game was the most harmless of this self-propagated gossip.

Now young Mr. Edward Wilbur had reached that stage in his loneliness where he had begun to wonder if perhaps he had not been somewhat at fault himself in the bickerings and the quarrelings which had ended his brief dream of domestic bliss in Blackwood. And when a man of young Mr. Edward Wilbur's type gets to such lengths, he must be very lonely and very desperate indeed.

To tell the truth, he did not believe one thousandth part of what he heard. Perhaps Mollie had taken a passing interest in this rising pugilist who was training for a championship fight almost at her own—or rather her father's—door. Perhaps she had met him, expressed an interest in his work, a hope that he'd win his fight, or something like that, and that out of this innocent thing had grown all these absurd yarns. Still, it was common decency for him, no matter what had happened between them, to go down to Blackwood and quietly put a flea in Mollie's ear.

It is interesting to note in passing that Wilbur, the minute his mind was made up to this course, experienced a feeling of peace and happiness that he had not known for months. It is also worthy of note that the more he thought about the idea the better he liked it; the idea of having some plausible excuse for returning to Blackwood and having a word with Mollie quickened his pulses. There were several other fleas he began planning to put in Mollie's ear.

Therefore, at seven o'clock on the evening of the sixteenth of September, Wilbur took the train for Blackwood.

On the previous evening, at the old Coliseum, there had been what is now an historic battle. In the tenth round Brasher Devlin had got in the terrible right hook for which he was noted, and Wild Kid Shannon had ceased suddenly to have any further interest in the proceedings or in the world's lightweight

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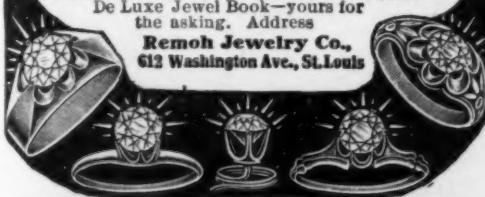
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championship, which up to this fight he had defended ably against all-comers.

The battle over, the championship won, Brasher Devlin had surprised and horrified his retinue at the training-quarters in Blackwood by announcing that this was his last fight, that his ambitions ringwards were completely satisfied, that now he was going to retire finally and irrevocably from the game. Nor could the threats, the tears, the pleadings of Noodles O'Rourke and the rest of the quota at the training quarters change this decision of his one iota.

"Well," said Noodles sadly at length, "there's nothin' to do, I guess, but announce it at the little blow-out some av the b'ys that's backed yer has planned to giv yer here to-morrer night at the trainin'-quarters. Yep, it was goin' to be a surprise to yer; they was comin' out here unbeknownst and take yer off yer guard; but what wit' the shock av this piece av news ye've went and sprung on us I'm clane undone and has to go and let the surprise outer the bag. Ye'll have to make out ye're surprised when they come, though."

That was at four in the afternoon; at seven, Brasher, to give his surprise party the best show to assemble and get ready without his embarrassing presence, strolled away from the little cottage and down the street. Somehow his steps took him along the road on which he had padded out so many weary miles of his road-work. This road took him, needless to say, past the Judge Manning place.

At seven-twenty Mr. Edward Wilbur, feeling as if he would like to carol his joy abroad to all the world, alighted from the train at Blackwood station. Since singing seemed a trifle undignified, he compromised upon whistling blithely as he made his way down the familiar streets towards Judge Manning's place.

He had nearly reached it when the whistling suddenly and most unblithely ceased. He had come into sight of his father-in-law's front gate, and there at the gate, cap in hand, stood a handsome, curly-headed young chap. Even in the dim light of the flickering street lamp opposite the gate, Wilbur recognized, from the many portraits which had adorned the papers only that morning,

the features of Brasher Devlin. Beside Brasher Devlin stood Mollie. They passed through the gate and into the shadows of the yard.

Wilbur, of course, was too far distant to hear the conversation which passed between them. He could not know that it concerned one very small and very trembling Angora kitten, which had been once again treed by the dog next door. Nor could he realize that Brasher Devlin merely went lightly up the tree, caught the recreant kitten, accepted Mollie's thanks as any well-bred stranger might have done, and then slowly and quietly resumed his walk along the road.

Wilbur could know none of these things because, biting his under lip furiously, he turned on his heel and retraced his steps towards the railroad station, intent on catching the next train back to town.

However, it is quite a walk from the Manning place to the station. It gives ample time for thought. By the time Wilbur had reached the Blackwood Inn, his blood was fairly boiling within him. He entered the Inn, found no train left for nearly an hour, bought a cigar, and, drawing a chair before the open fire burning on the hearth, he gave himself up to most unpleasant thoughts. These unpleasant thoughts were not directed against his wife, but against a certain upstart, swell-headed prize-fighter—one Brasher Devlin by name.

It was nine o'clock when Mr. Wilbur pushed back his chair from its place before the fire into which he had been staring moodily for something over half an hour and arose abruptly. He arose like a man who had suddenly made up his mind.

"Where's this Brasher Devlin's training quarters?" he asked shortly of the clerk behind the desk.

"Down at the old Fogarty cottage on Cross Street. Know it, don't you?"

Wilbur nodded and buttoned up his coat. When he left the Inn he slammed the door behind him.

Now news is scarce in Blackwood. The clerk called up a certain young lady in whom he was much interested and 'phoned her the delicious bit of news that Ted Wilbur was back in town; that he

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had been sitting for over an hour at the Inn, looking blacker than an Egyptian midnight; that he had inquired where Brasher Devlin was staying; that he had just left the Inn, looking as if he might be headed for murder. This particular young lady had many particular girl friends; naturally the news was too good to keep; so the telephone was worked over time. And so it came finally at nine-twenty to the ears of Nora Brennan, Judge Manning's cook, and Nora Brennan sought young Mrs. Edward Wilbur, who was lolling in the hammock in the soft dusk of an evening particularly warm for that time of year.

Meanwhile Brasher Devlin had returned to the little cottage, to be tremendously surprised—at instigating winks from Noodles O'Rourke—to find a goodly company gathered there, who fell upon him boisterously, hailed him with great acclaim, forced him into a chair at the head of the groaning table spread in the dining-room and bade him jovially to make merry with them.

It had been a noisy, uproarious dinner, but now a silence had come upon the room. It had come because Noodles O'Rourke, his face twisting queerly, had arisen from his seat and was wetting his lips with his tongue.

"Gintlemin," said Noodles, "this is a great occasion that brings us here together. It is a sad occasion, too. Brasher Devlin has announced as final his intention of l'avin' the ring, now that he has won the lightweight champeenship he's set his heart on."

A chorus of protesting voices about the board made Noodles rap smartly for silence.

"All ye can say will have no weight wit' him," Noodles went on. "His mind is made up on that score, and that's all there is to ut. But, gintlemin, before he retires, I want yer to drink a toast wit' me.

"Nivir, in all me days as a fighter meself, a handler and a trainer av some av the best, have I seen his equal. Nivir def'ated; nivir annywhere near ut! I doubt if there's a man alive in the world to-day av his weight that could stand up before him. From the time he first put

on the gloves till now, when he's champeen lightweight av the whole wor-rlid, has he ivir been to the mat for the count. So he comes to this champeenship as no other man could—wit' not wan dint in his shield, and not wan blot on his scutcheon.

"Gintlemin,"—Noodles glanced about the table to be sure that all the glasses were full as he picked up his own,—“up wit' yer glasses and drink wit' me to the health, the long life and the future prosperity av—”

The front door banged; footsteps came heavily across the little hall. Edward Wilbur, his eyes flaming, his lips tight, stepped into the room. Also, as he came, he ripped off his coat and tossed it into a far corner.

"Which one of this merry little party is Brasher Devlin?" he inquired hoarsely. "You, I believe," he answered himself, stepping to Brasher's chair.

"I am he," said Brasher, rising very quietly. "What's wrong with you, my friend?"

"Nothing," said Wilbur, smiling. "Nothing at all, except—" He paused and pursed his lips, as if his next words would explain everything, "my name's Wilbur."

With the words he lurched forward and aimed a terrific blow at Brasher Devlin's jaw.

Instantly all was commotion. "Here, here!" yelled O'Rourke, darting forward and catching Wilbur's upraised arm.

But Brasher stepped up and pushed the excited Noodles aside.

"Leave him to me, Noodles," he said calmly. Then he turned to Wilbur.

"There is, of course, some silly mistake here," said he. "We might get together and sift it out and—"

"Fists are the only thing that'll sift it," said Wilbur hotly.

"As you like about that," Brasher replied, and forthwith a battle royal began.

Young Mr. Wilbur was no novice at the game, it was plain from the start. Moreover, he was a splendid specimen of healthy young manhood; his muscles were like steel; he moved with the quickness of a cat. Grunts and the sound of blows sounded through the little room,

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BOTTLED AT THE SPRINGS, BUDA PEST, HUNGARY.

and also the clatter of dishes, as the excited guests leaped upon the table to get a better view of the fray. That it could have but one outcome they were all certain, and that that outcome would take place in the briefest of time they were also sure. Wherefore they crowded close to lose no detail of the affair.

In all fairness to Brasher Devlin let it be stated that, despite all Wilbur's speed and strength and knowledge of the game, the outcome would have been quite as the gentlemen on the table predicted to themselves, had it not been for the unfortunate fact that at the very outset, even as he was stemming Wilbur's first fierce rush, Brasher tripped over an upset chair. Momentarily he was thrown off his balance; before he could recover himself, Wilbur had caught him a fearful blow on the jaw with his right. And before the eyes of the horrified spectators the undefeated Brasher Devlin shot into the air, toppled over and went crashing into a corner of the room, where he lay prone and quivering, but quite unable to arise.

And even as they watched in tense silence,—Wilbur, rigid as some graven statue, the gentlemen on the table trying to swallow their several breaths in their astonishment and excitement,—the front door flew open again.

"Where is he? Where's Ted? Oh, where is my husband?" came an agonized voice from the hall.

Noodles O'Rourke stepped into the hall. There, breathless from much haste, her eyes wide, her hair disheveled, stood Mrs. Edward Wilbur.

"Oh, there's been some horrible misunderstanding!" she cried, clutching Noodles by the coat-sleeve. "I have just heard that my husband was in town; that he had come down here looking for Brasher Devlin. Where is my husband? Tell me! Has he been hurt?"

"Well, not so'st yer'd notice it anny," O'Rourke growled.

Then he was aware of footsteps at his back. He turned to find Wilbur standing there behind him.

Mrs. Wilbur flew to him. Unmindful

of the curious faces all about she threw her arms about him.

"You *are* hurt, Ted! You *are*!" she panted, catching sight of a slight cut on his lips where one of Brasher's blows had caught him. "Oh! Oh! Let me fix it for you!"

Out came a filmy handkerchief with which she dabbed intermittently at the injured lip.

Wilbur was looking at her curiously.

"Would you have cared, Mollie, if I had been hurt?" he asked very unsteadily.

"Cared? Oh, Ted!" She buried her face in the front of his coat with something like a sob.

Noodles O'Rourke coughed deprecatingly. Also he stepped forward and touched Mrs. Wilbur's arm.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said he very coldly, "but if yer don't mind, I'd like to suggest that yer take yer Teddy away from here. He's done about damage enough for one evenin'!"

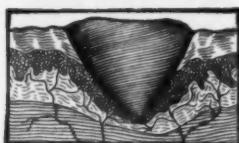
Grandly he preceded them to the door; grandly he bowed the pair out. Wilbur, staring at his wife, seemed quite oblivious to what was going on about him.

Noodles stood watching them darkly as they went down the steps. There was a scraping sound in the dining-room; uncertain footsteps crossed the floor. A hand was laid on Noodles' shoulder. Brasher Devlin, his cheek bruised, his nose bleeding, stood beside him, smiling beatifically. He pointed to the two figures moving down the path. Without waiting to get beyond the range of the light which flooded out on them from the open front door, Wilbur had slipped his arm about his wife and drawn her to him.

"Noodles," said Brasher with a whimsical smile, and also rather thickly, by reason of the handkerchief he was holding to his nose, "I'm afraid there's a dent or two on that shield now, and that the scutcheon isn't without a blot, after all. But cheer up, old hoss—"

He pointed to the couple moving down the path.

—"It's all in a good cause."



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OUTSIDE, the wind screamed and swore, and the snow swirled in tumbling torrents of speckled whiteness. But in The Little Place That We Knew, there was warmth, and comfort, and good cheer. And it was with a sigh of relief that we—the Property Man and I, that is—shook the clinging whiteness from hat and coat and, hanging them upon the hooks provided for them, (and provided with a large sign that warned you that the proprietor would not be responsible if some one else should take a coat or hat therefrom,) seated ourselves at a little round table.

A waiter came, and went, and came

again; and anon the Property Man waxed reminiscent.

"This reminds me of the time I was in the suburbs of the Rocky Mountains," he said, at length, reflectively. "I stranded in Denver that time; and a guy gave me a job for the winter holding down a claim—proving it, or improving it, or something like that, they call it out there. I never told you about that, did I?"

I shook my head and signaled for the waiter. Whereupon he spake:

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"Not at all," says the guy. "Nothing like that. Your sole duties is to play

seven-up and do your own cooking. You don't even have to wash the dishes if you aren't captious that way. Put a crown-sheet on the most used portion of your habiliments and go as far as you like. It's solely and strictly up to you as long as you stay on the reservation and so don't destroy the validity of the copyright; and there wont be much chance of your romancing around none as soon as the snow sets in."

"If I assimilate them statements of yours with due exactness," I says, "the sum total of the job consists in merely being there—like a star prisoner in a county jail?"

"You're on like a edifice," he returns. And we closes the deal then and there.

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The guy himself drove us up to the claim in a buckboard drawed by a couple of skates that looked as though they'd be fine when they got the upholstering done. It took him two days.

He stands around watching us while we unload our cuisine and stacks it up in a corner of the little one-room shack that was to be our winter palace.

"Where's the straight jackets?" he asks, when we're done.

"The which?" I says.

"The straight-jackets," he says.

"Oh," I says, very ca'm, not wanting him to know he'd handed out one that was too hot for me to nail, "they'll be here in the next boat."

"I hope so," he says. And he beats it.

Well, for the first few days we has

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The collywobble was a peaceful, soporific sort of animal. Gimp-Leg would tell us to go easy for fear it would wake up.

the time of our lives. We gets up every morning about three o'clock in the afternoon, eats a tea biscuit or two and has a drink, and then goes at the ten-cent limit. Nobody has any money; so we marks out I. O. U.'s on the edge of a newspaper and uses those. We plays until we gets tired; then we has another tea biscuit and goes to bed again.

It's Monday when we gets there. Tuesday night we sort of begins to lose track of dates, hours and unimportant things like that; and Thursday gets so mixed up with Friday we can't tell 'em apart. Popover, he starts to cut notches for every day on the door jamb. But this seems such an irksome task that he finally decides he'll cut only every week—and then he changes this resolve to a monthly arrangement—which would have been all right only he loses track of the days and weeks. So he compromises by cutting a notch or two whenever he thinks it's time, and lets it go at that.

At the end of a couple of days, or a fortnight, or whatever it was, I'm a

dollar eighty ahead, and Popover and Gimp-Leg are both ninety cents behind. Wanting to get up even as soon as possible, they proposes that we raise the limit to a dollar; and I, not wishing to seem afflicted with chilblains, agrees.

At the end of some more time, I'm about nine thousand dollars to the good and Popover and Gimp-Leg are still bearing the losses about even. So we raises the limit to an even hundred.

About this time it begins to snow and the newspaper edge gives out. Concerning the former we don't do nothing. But to overcome the latter obstacle, we cuts the cards to see whose shirt shall go to take the place of the wood pulp product. It's Popover's. And before that's used up, and mine is begun on, I'm ahead, as near as we can figure, about seven million dollars. Which is pretty good considering that our aggregate salaries is about three dollars and sixty cents a week.

About this same epoch, the Smithfield ham gives up a reluctant ghost and the interstices of the last tea-biscuit box ac-

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cords only a dry rattle in response to searching fingers. Also the jig water supply begins to look like the Croton watershed in a drought. Likewise it keeps on snowing.

There's nothing left but the salt pork. Now salt pork, you know, is the greatest thirst disseminator known to the world, at large or incarcerated. It is the Saloon-keeper's Friend and the Inebriates' Apology; also when you drop a chunk into your stomach, it won't lie there in contentment, like a hard boiled egg or a stewed prune does, not even for a minute. Instead, the instant it gets there, it rears up on its nether limbs and glares around with a dissatisfied, hyphenated look and says to itself, "What is this dump, anyhow—the desert of Sahara?" and begins to kick against the wall and yowl for a waiter. And it doesn't make any difference how well you treat it—it's never satisfied. It complains about the service, and always wants more about twice as fast as you can

get it to it. Salt pork is sure the most discontented, petulant, peevish, clamorous sort of fodder ever devised by mankind.

It lived up to its reputation with us, all right. We'd get up in the morning, or the afternoon, or the evening, sometime, and have a chunk of it before breakfast; and notwithstanding the fact that we'd wash it down with copious libations at the time, we couldn't get the cards dealt before it would be yelping for more. And in order to appease it, we had to have the bottle on the table; and while one guy was dealing, the other two would be trying to keep their salt

pork quiet enough so's they could hear how many cards the dealer was drawing.

Well, when I had got about eighteen or thirty million dollars to the good, the snow was pretty near as many feet deep. However, we didn't lubricate none because it didn't interfere with us and we didn't interfere with it. The snow just snowed; and we just went on with our little thousand-dollar limit. And that's all there was to it—then.

Well, about the third deal one day, Popover all of a sudden lays down his hand and turns his lamps into the corner of the cabin.

"Well, of all things!" he says, just like that.

"What things?" says Gimp-Leg and me.

"Look at that bootjack," he says. Then, all of a sudden, he picks up eight million dollars of shirt currency and throws it into the corner.

"Hey, get out o' that, you!" he yelps. And then he turns to us. "It was drinking up all the bug juice," he says apologetically.

I gazes at Gimp-Leg.

"Did you see it?" I says.

"No," he says. "But I just seen something in that other corner there. It had blue legs, and it wore spectacles," he says. "It looked just like a collywobble. It had pink whiskers, too."

"What's a collywobble?" says I.

"I don't know," he says, "but this thing I seen looked exactly like one."

"Well," I says, considerable disgusted, "it looks to me as though you guys—" And then I seen something myself.

It was sure the most deluded-looking



As for the helwinkle, I never see a more affectionate pet. . . . He had distinction and originality and initiative.

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thing I ever laid my lamps on. It was something like a soft-shelled clam, and something like a Belgian hare, but most of all like a pickled lime. It was setting on one corner of the pork barrel, holding up three fingers (or maybe three toes) and winking at me, sociable and coördinate as you please.

I hadn't never seen one before, but I knew what it was right off. I don't know how I knew. I just knew. That's all. It was a spangle-tail, Scandinavian helwinkle. Just as plain as you please, it was that. It couldn't have been nothing else, looking as it did.

Well, right from then on, we all lost interest in the finest poker game I ever set into—a game that would have given that rich old guy, Creases, heart failure to have drawn cards in. Why, there wasn't a pot that didn't have close onto half a million dollars of home-made currency into it. And a raise of a couple of hundred thousand was the customary thing. It would have made John W. Gates pinch himself to be sure he wasn't Hetty Green, that game would.

But from then on, we flagged it. We just set around devoting ourselves to our new pets and having the time of our lives.

Popover had an awful time keeping his away from the demented alcohol. He sat up all night for three days pushing the bootjack back every time it tried to devastate the bottle. He'd tell us all about it every evening, when we woke up, if it didn't happen to be morning or afternoon. But the collywobble was a peaceful, soporific sort of animal that didn't cause no trouble except that every time we'd move, Gimp-Leg would "ssssssss!" at us and tell us to go easy because we'd wake it up.

As for the helwinkle, I never see a more affectionate or gentle pet. Me and him had great times together. I taught him to stand up, and lay down, and roll over, and beg, and play dead. And one day he surprised me by reciting "Curfew Shall not Ring To-Night," without any preparation at all. So, finding in him reluctant talents that I did not know he possessed, I learned him the balcony scene from "Romeo and

Juliet" and he'd play *Jule* on the pork barrel all the afternoon while I laid on the floor doing the *Romeo* end of the act—sometimes he'd keep me up a couple of days in succession doing it. For every time I'd quit, he'd cry; and I just couldn't bear to hurt his feelings.

I couldn't justly compare him with the bootjack and the collywobble, because I never seen them very good. Once, I got a glimpse, or thought I did, of the collywobble. But I couldn't be sure.

They seemed to be stupid sort of things—both of 'em—and I couldn't enthuse to any extent. As near as I could get it, the only distinctive feature that the bootjack possessed was a inordinary appetite for alcoholic stimulus and a tendency toward dipsomania. The collywobble was a mild, anaemic, unindividul sort of character who used to spend most of his time between naps combing his pink foliage with his fingers and looking like he was expecting to have his picture took.

But the helwinkle was a thing to be proud of. He had distinction, and originality, and initiative. You never could tell what he was going to do next. You might wake up and find him painting pictures, or writing poetry, or juggling five pieces of salt pork in one hand while he filled a hollow tooth with the other. There was an element of uncertain certainty about him that was delightful. You could be sure that he was going to do something—but you could never be sure what it would be. You'd expect him, say, to be composing a sonata and you'd see him making ice cream out of snow flakes in a paper bag. Or you might think he was going to sing a bit of grand opera and instead you'd find him sewing buttons on his pajamas. He invented a very useful thing one night—it was a device for hunting lost collar buttons. You'd put it on the floor and it would run all around and then, when it came to the collar button, it would bark and point, like a setter pup, and all you had to do was to go and get it. I tried to get him to patent it; but he said what was the use? Somebody'd only do him out of it.

That was the pleasantest winter I ever

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spent. Me and Popover and Gimp-Leg were so happy, and so interested in our pets that we forget even to be sarcastic to each other—like we started in to do. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden was the last five minutes of a chowder party compared to us, and as for Damon and Pythias, David and Jonathan, and all them guys, why, alongside of the love, and affection, and amity that exists between me and Popover and Gimp-Leg, they was nursing a vendetta.

It went along that way for some weeks, or months, or years, or whatever it was. The concentrated quintessence of harmony, felicity and brotherly love invaded that tent until it oozed out the cracks and melted the snow. We laughed and we sang and we played with our pets from morn till dewy eve and back to morn again, ever with blithsome jest upon our lips and melody within our hearts. Popover would call attention to some added dipsomaniacal spasm on the part of his bootjack with great eclair, and me and Gimp-Leg, in the fullness of our tolerant exuberance, would smile encouragingly. Or maybe Gimp-Leg would discover a little less sleeplessness on the part of the collywobble—wherewith me and Popover would encourage him in his glee with sympathetic word and kindly gesture. And when I would call attention to some new-born talent on the part of the helwinkle, they would accord me the same delightful and affectionate consideration. Gee! But it was great. By far the happiest moments of my tumultuous life was spent upon that bleak mountain-side covered in by the alabastine blanket of the snows.

But all things must come to a end. The jig-juice at last gave out.

At first we attached no particular insignificance to the fact and didn't notice no difference except that the salt pork went into sort of a frenzy and hollered so loud we couldn't hear ourselves think.

This frenzy at length turned into nervous prostration, or some such melody, and we was kept so busy trying to bring it around that we didn't have time to notice much else. But at the end of two or three days, or weeks, or something like that, it got a little better and relapsed into a condition of injured dignity which give us a little time to pay some attention to the bootjack, the collywobble and the helwinkle.

But they was gone!

At first we set around and whistled, and cooed, and called, thinking that maybe, in a spirit of playfulness, they



We sets down on the spot which is under the spot where the floor used to be, and gives our sorrow full vent.

was hiding themselves from us. But there was nothing doing.

Then the realization that they had actually and wholly departed burst upon us in all its force; and three more *distrait* and distracted guys you never had the pleasure of observing. In our frantic grief, we rushes around like chickens with their heads cut off, calling upon our pets in voices depleted with emotion.

This condition of frenzied, unreasonless despair lasts maybe a couple of hours, or a day or two, and then at last, worn out with our ungovernable emotions, we sets down alongside the pork



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barrel, with heads in our hands and tears trickling through between our fingers like rain water through a sieve.

At length Popover leaps to his feet, in great excitement.

"Maybe they're hiding under the floor!" he exclaims.

In considerable less'n a split second, me and Gimp-Leg gets his idea; and in a few minutes more, we've got the floor all tore up. But search as we will, we can't find hide nor hair of our little lost friends.

"Maybe they're in the roof!" says Gimp-Leg.

We tears the roof off, and looks. But all in vain.

"Maybe there in the walls!" says I.

So we rips the walls all down. Again nothing doing.

"They've went," wails Popover, lugubriously.

Whereat we all sets down on the place which is under the spot where the floor used to be, and gives our sorrow full vent.

It's maybe three days, or three weeks, after this that the guy who owns the claim comes blowing up. He's got three husky piano movers with him, and each is carrying a sort of canvas frock coat that seems to have been cut considerable more for serviceability than for style.

At the time, we're setting on a small drift (for most of the snow has melted by this time), playing cards; but we

don't take no heart in it, and it's only a small game—a hundred thousand dollar limit.

We eyes them in christened sadness as they comes stampeding warily up the hill, and when they gets near, Popover he says,

"What's all them clothes your friends is carrying?"

"Straight jackets," says the guy that owns the claim. "I thought you might need 'em, so I brought 'em along—and three tailors to try 'em on."

Popover he shakes his head, sorrowfully.

"If you got any widder's weeds, now," he says. And then, he adds, to Gimp-Leg, "I got three typewriters and a pair o' Johns. What's yourn?"

The Property Man ceased speaking.

"Is that all?" I asked.

He hesitated a moment.

"All," he said, at length, "except that next year I took the same job again,

trying to find the helwinkle. But after two weeks, or two months, or something like that, just when I was expecting it to show up, there come charging into the wigwam one night a thing that looked like a cross between a gargoyle, a behemoth, a mission rocker and an arts and crafts bungalow; and it chased me plumb into the headquarters of the W. C. T. U., in Denver, and under the president's desk, before it would let go—and I never goes back no more."

